Contributions by Horatio Bottomley, May Edginton, Jessie Pope, Matheson Lang, W. Douglas Newton, etc.

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ROOPS.
See p. 274.
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Here There and Everywhere.

The above is a re-production of a photograph shewing an advertisement of BEECHAM'S PILLS on an Arab Fort, somewhere in Mesopotamia, has been sent home by a Highlander who has been on service there for twelve months. BEECHAM'S PILLS are in great demand by the Over-seas Forces and have played a useful part in keeping heroes fit.

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There are many points of difference between bathing as it is done in England and in France. On page 247 Mdlle. Lucienne Dervyle, the pretty young French actress, describes her experience in both countries, and proves—in a series of delightful photographs—how *chic* and attractive a Frenchwoman can be in bathing kit.

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Photo *Foundo.*

The English girl bathes for the sake of bathing, but Mdlle. Dervy'e confesses that with the French girl it is different—with her bathing is chiefly an opportunity to display her pretty bathing costume.

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"Bathing As He Is" Done.

No Frenchwoman's bathing-outfit is complete without shoes and socks, or at least sandals, to protect her feet from stones and grit.

By Lucienne Dervyle.

Bathing as understood by the Frenchwoman is an affair of pomp and circumstance, not the riotous, energetic amusement beloved of English water nymphs. In the following article—illustrated from photographs specially taken for the ROYAL MAGAZINE by Yevonde—Mdlle. Lucienne Dervyle, the charming actress, who is a French countess in private life and who played in *High Jinks* and later in the French plays at the Court Theatre, draws a happy comparison between English and French methods of bathing.

To bathe, or not to bathe; that is the question?

You see, I know my Shakespeare, and love him, too. Perhaps he did not say "bathe," but "that makes nothing," as our French phrase has it.

"But you don't know how to bathe in France!" said an English friend to me soon after I was first in this country. "Come to the sea with me and I will show you what bathing really means."

Voila! We go to the sea, and it is splendid. A large, fine beach, and sand, and the weed of the sea that smells so good. And a line of little houses, like soldiers in a row, at the tip of the sea.

"Get in quickly!" says my friend to me. Quickly I get in—at least, I climb up some steps, and am soon inside the *machin de bain*. And then I slide and nearly fly through the other door into the sea! The floor slopes and there is but a tiny mirror. But somehow I put on my bathing dress and my cap, and then I take my parasol from Japan, and go to sit on the sand, or walk some little time in the sun.

But my friend, she call to me from the house next door: "Are you ready, Lucienne? Oh, but you can't take that sunshade into the water! Put it back—ugh—o-oh! it's cold—hurry up! Oh—your socks! You can't bathe in socks!"

But I think I can; and I do, so that the nasty sharp stones shall not cut my toes.

I see my friend, and all the other people, far off, going so *rapidement* into the deep sea. "Come on!" they address me. "Come on, it's lovely!"

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Vraiment, it is lovely indeed, but I do not swim, and I cannot go so far. I stay by myself, with no kind rope to hold, as in my own country-seaside; and I dip up and down, very alone, while the others go far out, and laugh, and come back very wet on the head, and happy.

Then we go back to the little houses, and my friend she say: "Get a towel and come along to my machine. Let's sit on the steps and eat buns!"

Me, I like the buns; they are so English, and so spicy and full of currants. So we sit in the sun and eat the buns, and my friend she tell me I must learn to swim, because many people swim in England; and I say I want to swim, but in France one bathes without swimming.

After that I learn to swim, and now I know of all the manners one bathes in this country. I have bathed from a tent, a machine, from my own room in hotels that are on the beach, from a cave in a cliff, from behind a great big rock—there are so many ways and places it is possible to bathe in England.

And I understand your way of taking a bath in the sea, and like it very much. It is quite different to ours in France, for over here you bathe anyhow, any time, just

Mdlle. Dervyle finds bathing in England very pleasant, and delights to emulate the unconventional English girl who combs her hair and lies full length on the beach in the most natural way possible.

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for the fun of it, or for the pleasure of swimming far, while in France we bathe for ceremony—that is, if "we" are of the feminine gender. I think that few women swim in my country, yet many women bathe. Our swimmers are men; and for us it is enough to wear a pretty dress, walk *sur la plage*, and dip for a time in the waves.

Do I make myself understood? In France we think much of our bathing costume, cloak, and cap. Our fashions change each year, and one sees on the *plage* wonderful, *chic* creations, from the Rue de la Paix, never designed to stand the energetic strain of swimming.

Our caps, too, are very elegant and becoming, but not made for thrusting through the water with each stroke, like the bathing-caps of English swimming girls.

In my country, at the middle of the morning—between our first *petit déjeuner* of coffee or chocolate and rolls and the big *déjeuner* of later in the day—we bathe from small tents or little wooden huts—very gay and painted many colours. After we have put on a *robe de bain*, and the smartest cap, and perhaps a cloak, we go and walk in the sun on the beach.

Rarely does one see a girl without socks, or at least sandals of canvas, tied round her ankles, and high up her legs with tape—bright red sometimes. Many

The first plunge is always a chilly affair, but——

— once taken, Mdlle. Dervyle thoroughly enjoys a frolic in the water, and finds it far more invigorating than bobbing up and down holding on to a rope, which is a Frenchwoman's way of bathing.

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Mdlle. Dervyle recommends the French custom of wearing socks or stockings when bathing, as sand is so troublesome to get off one's feet—

—and when coming out of the water there is not always a convenient perch on which to sit while repairing such ravages.

a rope stretching out into the water. We hold this rope and dip up and down, while the men swim hard. It is pretty to look at, but since I have learnt bathing as he is done in England I know there is a better way to bathe.

Some adventures I have had—quite funny ones. Once, when I did not know much of the customs of bathing in this country, I was in the sea one morning, and was trying to swim, not very far from the shore. My friends had gone a long way out, swimming to a buoy, and I was alone. Soon a lady and gentleman came to the sea, and I saw the gentleman—not very young—go out towards the buoy. The lady lay down in the water, and soon, to my horror, she began to kick her legs so strangely and flop her arms up and down.

"*Tiens!*" I said to myself. "She is drowning, and I cannot save her!" Still she waved her arms and legs, kicking the water, and I called to the gentleman:

"*Monsieur! Monsieur!* She drowns! She drowns!"

He turned round and came back so quickly, and then she was lying quite still on the water, and I thought she was no longer alive. When he arrived, red and with no breath, she sat up and waved at him!

"What's all this about?" he cried at me, very crossly. "Who's drowning?"

"*Madame!*" I tell him. "She kicks and waves her arms, and I cannot help her. so I call you."

"Mad!" says the angry gentleman.

Frenchwomen bathe in stockings to match their costume, with sandals as well; so when the Parisienne is dressed for her bathe she is really as much clothed as for a promenade in the Bois, and quite as smart.

When we have aired our dresses we go to the sea, and in France there is nearly always

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"Have you never seen anyone kick the water when they float?"

"Float? I don't know him—what is he?" I am obliged to ask them, and then they both laugh; but the gentleman says he will never forgive me for spoiling his swim and giving him a terrible fright.

Another day, with my English friend who teach me how to bathe in your fashion, I went for a long walk, and we took our bathing suits and towels, and came at last to a little bay, so pretty, with sand and big rocks, and just a few houses near the sea. We found a nice rock with a cave behind it, and then we undressed, and soon began our bathe.

We left our clothes hidden behind the rock, and stayed in the sea quite happily for a long time. But when we ran over the sand to the rock, to find again our clothes, they had gone! There was no wind, so they could not have blown away, and the stones we had put to keep them safe had been lifted off. And then close by we see a heap of clothes!

We ran to pick them up—*and they are not ours!* This was worse and worse, and we wanted to sit down and cry. Then my friend, who tells me it is a real mystery, says we must go to one of the houses and see if they can help us. So, very cold and shivering, we start to walk to the nearest house. And then, running towards us in a big hurry, comes a nursemaid, and in her hands she holds a lot of clothing—*our clothes!*

Seeing us, she stops, and begins to say: "Please excuse me; two of the young ladies in the house have been bathing, and they swam round to the next bay, and left their clothes here. I was sent down to fetch them from behind a rock. So I took the first ones I saw behind a rock—and they were the wrong ones." So we got our clothes again, and all was happiness.

There is one thing I like better in French bathing, and that is our custom of wearing stockings, socks, or sandals in the water. This is how I think about it—feet, on the whole, are not always pretty, and often there are sharp stones on the beach and also in the sea. Therefore it seems wiser to protect the feet.

"English bathing makes much hunger," says Mdlle. Derryle, who enjoys a bun after her dip—

—just as much as in France she would enjoy promenading on the beach or sitting in picturesque fashion among the seaweed.

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Should Men be Made to Marry?

By
HORATIO BOTTOMLEY
(*Editor of "John Bull"*).

Photo *Dixon, Liverpool.*

Mr. Horatio Bottomley, the author of the following remarkable article.

"When the war is over there will be a terrible shortage of men, a pitiable surplusage of women, and, unless we are very careful, a perilous decline in the birth-rate," says Mr. Horatio Bottomley. In the following powerful article Mr. Bottomley suggests compulsory marriage for men as a remedy, and outlines a scheme by which every eligible man between the ages of twenty-five and forty should be compelled to marry, and, where necessary, assisted by the State to shoulder his family responsibilities.

It was one of the peculiarities of our pre-war politics that we were generally ready to make a stupendous fuss about trifles, while leaving the big and important things to look after themselves. But it is the merest truism to say that after the war we shall be saner and wiser for the lessons learnt in the great school of suffering and sorrow. We shall have a truer sense of proportion and a sounder political perspective. We shall put first things first. So I hope, and so I am emboldened to believe. I therefore make no apology for discussing the simple human problems that lie at the roots of national well-being. A homely, practical philosophy, a plain policy for plain people, is what is mostly needed at this fateful moment of our history.

The Pivot of the Empire.

We must remember, too, that when all is said, the Home is the pivot of the Empire. The domestic economy of nations is a vital factor in the upward evolution of the race. Last month I devoted an article to Britain's Babies; and now, although I suppose I have put the cart before the horse, I have a word or two to say on the "previous question" of marriage and giving in marriage. For no human institution, however sacred, however consecrated by immemorial usage, will altogether escape critical appraisement in the searching Audit of Armageddon.

However, I cannot cover the whole field of sex relations; that would need volumes instead of a corner in a magazine. Purposely, I limit myself to a single line of inquiry: Should marriage be made compulsory? Should the nation demand a measure of matrimonial conscription? Should men be forced into wedlock by the strong hand of the State?

To Combat a Declining Birth-rate.

No sooner is the problem stated than I can hear some of my readers pronouncing judgment in advance: "A preposterous suggestion!" "The very idea!" "What next, we wonder?"—or, on the other hand: "Capital notion!" "Just the thing!" "Ought to have been done years ago!" So fatally easy to quarrel and differ, isn't

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it?—and so hard to arrive at a practical measure of agreement on these matters of everyday concern. But wait a minute. Let us take our bearings. When the war is over there will be a terrible shortage of men, a pitiable surplusage of women, and, unless we are very careful, a perilous decline in the birth-rate. These are the facts, and they are "chiels that winna ding." So, my friends, put on your considering-caps. What is to be done?

Who Says Polygamy?

Polygamy? Well, I see the Huns are beginning to talk about it—professing an immense admiration for the liberal matrimonial institutions of their friends, the Turks. But it is a far cry from London to Stamboul, and quite as far on the moral scale from London to Berlin. As a last resort, if there were no alternative between polygamy and racial suicide, we might have to consider the proposal seriously and in all its bearings; but at present I am looking for a solution more in keeping with our national habits and traditions.

Essentially, I believe we are a monogamous people. Ah, yes, Mr. Cynic, I know what you are going to say, and I am not unmindful of *that*—but I am talking of marriage. Whatever his youthful escapades may have been, it is the ambition of the average normally-minded British citizen some day to make a home for "the one little girl in the world"; and in that harmonious setting he wants no second string to his bow.

One Man, One Wife.

As one of the boys in the trenches recently reminded me: "Tommy," at any rate, is not very keen on a "leasehold lass," but pines for his own "freehold bit of property." And what "Tommy" thinks to-day all Britain will be thinking after the war. And in future we must see that every "eligible" man—I would put the age limit from twenty-five to forty—is conscripted for the matrimonial army. There may not at first be quite enough to go round, but these things have a knack of adjusting themselves, and "One Man, One Wife" will do at any rate for the present; and this notwithstanding the schoolboy's definition of the one wife institution as "Monotony."

Freedom of Choice.

Yes, let us leave polygamy to the lower races and get back to my suggestion of compulsory marriage—conscription for the Army of Benedicks. Of course, I am not proposing for a moment that any man should be forced to marry a particular girl. That would never do. Such a course would lead to all sorts of complications. First of all, the girl would naturally desire a voice in the matter and she would obviously resent having a husband forced upon her; and, secondly, the young man himself would expect freedom of choice.

At the same time, I have a vague idea that if there were a State Matrimonial Bureau, whereby eligible men and women could register themselves—with particulars of age, means, and other items of interest—many couples could be happily brought together, and there would be an automatic end to the spurious matrimonial agencies which now exploit lonely and credulous bachelors and spinsters. After all, however, I suspect that we should have to rely mainly upon the fiscal argument. I know it is a crude reflection, when dealing with such a sentimental subject as marriage, but it is a cynical fact that it is money that makes the world go round.

It may just possibly be true, as some cynic has said, that marriages would be just as successful if they were arranged by the Lord Chancellor, but they would not be half so interesting; and the right to choose his own mate, with a little futile advice from his relatives, is among the primal rights of man. But why not compel every healthy man to marry by a certain age, as an essential part of his duty to the State, for the replenishment of our wasted manhood and the perpetuation of the British stock?

Turning the Fiscal Screw.

It would not be necessary to make celibacy a criminal offence. The man who declined to marry need not be sent to gaol. Matrimonial compulsion might employ subtler means. A few turns of the fiscal screw would work wonders. Bachelordom and its privileges might be made far more expensive than marriage and its responsibilities. The suggestion of a "Bachelor's Tax" is no new one, and for the life of me I can see no objection to it.

There should also be a great distinction for the purposes of Income Tax between the man with a family to support and the selfish man whose individual comfort and necessities are his only care. Here is another of those untapped sources of revenue which I commend to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Nor need we stop there. Beyond the determined age, marriage might be made a criterion of political rights. No wife, no vote! First to the altar, then to the polling-booth! In these and other ways virtual compulsion might quite easily be attained. And there

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should be no exemption for Conscientious Objectors!

What do you think of the scheme?

"England Expects——"

In principle, I anticipate little objection. In the present posture of national affairs, with thousands of our best and bravest sacrificed in the great struggle for Liberty, and the future of the race thereby imperilled, the plain duty of every fit man to marry and rear a family is pretty generally admitted; and under pressure of war conditions we have grown familiar with the policy of compelling men to discharge functions which it is their plain duty to perform. But we have learnt another and a greater lesson. Just as it is the duty of the subject to serve the State to the limit of his powers, so it is the proper function of the State to aid the patriotic citizen, to smooth for him the path of service, to supplement his resources, to strengthen his arms which, though willing enough, may be quite unable to bear the burden of family responsibilities.

Subsidising Marriage.

This wide embracing principle has a distinct bearing upon the problems of marriage and birth, regarded from the standpoint of national well-being. If the State compels marriage at a given age, accepting no excuses, granting no exemptions—applying the Ordinance of Matrimony with equal rigour to rich and poor—then the State, as a matter of justice and of wise domestic policy, must accept some share of the family responsibilities entailed. So now, my perspicacious readers, you see where we have arrived.

Sooner or later marriage must be subsidised. Just as I would impose a direct tax upon Bachelordom, and would also, in addition, make a special levy upon the single men's capital, so would I, in all cases of proved necessity, grant a subsidy to married couples. It might be found practicable to fund the Bachelor Tax and levy, and apply the money exclusively to the relief of struggling husbands and wives.

But wait! I have still another plan. Let us subsidise motherhood; for that, after all, is the practical aim of matrimony. Wherever it is needed, let us give a bounty to the babies. "There is no wealth but life," as Ruskin reminded us; and the whole object of our scheming is that as a people, as a nation and an Empire, as trustees of humanity and civilisation, we may "have life and have it more abundantly." That precious commodity is worth paying for, if need be, in rivers of gold, and we ought to pay for it gladly and willingly.

Preferential Treatment for Parents.

We already recognise this principle to a small extent in connection with our present Income Tax arrangements, but the allowance is most paltry and inadequate. Every parent, in my opinion, should be entitled to deduct from Income, before paying Tax, an agreed sum towards the maintenance of his children. On the other hand, married people without families would pay the full Tax; for isn't it the height of absurdity that a married couple rearing a family of five or six girls and boys should be compelled to contribute to the State the same proportion of their income as the childless man and woman with no one but themselves to support? All these considerations arise when we come to consider my text of compulsory marriage, and I find it difficult to call to mind any problems of more vital importance to the Empire.

New Times, New Tools.

On the whole, and with such ancillary arrangements, I am inclined to favour the compulsory solution, should the problem wait for political treatment. But perhaps such methods will not be necessary. Wise old Dame Nature has a wonderful way of asserting herself in these matters, and her eternal wizardry is still to be seen in "the way of a man with a maid."

Still we have done no harm by exploring the possibilities of the situation. For it is certain that when the war is over we shall have to cast aside the rusty implements of the past, and set to work with new tools, fashioned on the anvil of supreme necessity.

The First Duty of the State.

And what necessity can be greater than that of maintaining the population of the British Empire? It was Napoleon who said that in war numbers count, and his axiom is still almost as true to-day, notwithstanding the devilish ingenuity of modern warfare. But however that may be, who will deny that in the days of peace ahead we shall require enormous additions to the Hive if British industries are to hold their own, and, above all, if the British Empire is to be made invulnerable against further onslaughts at the instance of foreign foes and rivals?

I have been in the habit of saying that the first duty of the State is to provide for the feeding of the people. I think, however, I must now modify that declaration by saying that the State's first duty is to encourage the production of a healthy, vigorous, and virile race—on the principle of "First catching

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your hare"—and that, of course, includes the feeding.

What think you then of my suggestion—of calling upon every eligible bachelor of mature age to show cause why he has not joined up in the army of British Benedicks? Don't you think it is a sound one?

A Chance for the Spinster.

Of course you might extend the suggestion by calling upon every eligible spinster to also "show cause," but that would scarcely be gallant, would it? Still, in State affairs, and especially in these days, it is a case of *autres temps, autres mœurs* ("other times, other manners,") as the French say. Perhaps there could be a special provision for leap year, during which all eligible single ladies should be called upon to claim what, after all, is the first and most precious of Women's Rights—the right to her share of the rib of old Adam which in the early days of the world was specially consecrated to her service.

But I must not continue with these weird, fascinating speculations, especially as women are now to have the vote, and I may one day want to get back to Parliament!

I will only say in conclusion that I have no sympathy with the selfish creature of a man who claims his share of all the joys of life and wilfully ignores its most sacred responsibilities. Such useless animals should be severely rationed—or better still, turned out to grass.

THE LITTLE WHITE ROSE.

There's a lil' white rose that grows in the lane
In the first spring days o' May,
An' because I be wantin' to see it again,
I wish the old winter away.
For the lil' white rose means more to me
Than all o' the flowers I ever did see
In hedge an' garden an' field an' tree—
The lil' white rose in the lane.

O! the lil' white rose that grows in the lane
I'm longin' again to see,
For it shone one night in the dimsey plain
When Jack spoke sweet to me.
He gave me a rose an' he promised me true
To hurry back soon as his leave was due,
An' whispered: "I'll allays be thinkin' o' you,
My lil' white rose in the lane."

O! lil' white rose that grows in the lane,
You'm mortal sweet to me,
For Jack'll be back when you'm blowin' again,
An' 'tis him I wants to see.
So I'm wishin' the lingerin' winter away,
An' longin' an' longin' for rosetime and May,
An' hopin' that soon I'll be hearin' him say:
"My lil' white rose in the lane."

Bernard Moore.

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"GOOD MORNING, ROSE!"

By Louise Heilgers.

"The rose is fairest when 'tis budding new,
And hope is brightest when it dawns from fears.
The rose is sweetest washed with morning dew
And love is loveliest when embalmed in tears."

"I wonder if he's still asleep!"

Fresh, in her simple pink cotton frock, as any of the early roses that gemmed her lawn, she tip-toed across the grass to where he lay beneath the fragrant shadow of a giant lilac tree that still seemed to hold the scent of its lately departed blossoms in its leaves.

Her caution, however, was quite unnecessary, for the man beneath his parasol of green foliage still slumbered, heedless alike of her light tread and the loud carolling of a thrush in a branch overhead.

The face of the woman watching him grew very tender as she looked down at the long, straight form, encompassed by pillows, covered with rugs, that lay in the invalid chair—tender, and a little joyous, and perhaps a little afraid, too.

Luck, the most wonderful luck in the world, had sent this newest and most glorious of V.C.'s across her path.

It was true that to the V.C. himself, driving through Haseldon on a visit to a married sister who lived in the neighbourhood, a bad

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motor smash might not have come exactly in the guise of luck; still, on the other hand, there was no doubt that it had introduced him to Rose Campbell, against whose garden fence he had literally been thrown, to the damage alike of that fence and two of his own limbs.

And if Rose Campbell was to the V.C. one half what the light on her face as she looked at him betokened he was to her, then she must have been almost as dear to him as that much-coveted strip of ribbon, which everybody knows must mean more to a man than the most loved woman on earth.

Just how soon Jeffrey Tarnington had begun to love her, Rose herself was not quite sure. She liked to think it was that morning, when waking, after a long night of pain, he had looked up to see her bending over his pillow, her arms full of budding roses she had been out in the garden to gather for him, and his eyes, wandering from the flowers to her face, he had murmured a faint: "Good morning, Rose."

If he had never before called her "Rose," it was quite certain that from that day he had never called her anything else. Indeed, they had both alike forgotten that ever, in the beginning of things, he had formally addressed her as Mrs. Campbell.

Mrs. Campbell—hateful name!—the hot colour stung her cheeks even then as she looked down on the sleeping man under the tree.

If ever he found out—as of course he must sooner or later . . .

"Dear God, let me have my happiness first." She sent a voiceless prayer up through the lilac tree. Suddenly he stirred, stretched himself beneath his coverings, and woke.

"Good morning, Rose." His dark eyes fastened themselves laughingly on her swiftly glowing face.

"It's not good morning. It's long past tea-time, you lazy boy," she laughed deliciously. "I thought you were going to sleep till to-morrow morning."

"It's this enchanted garden of yours." The man looked round at its June splendours whimsically, then back to the face that in its young pink and white was so like June, too. "I believe, if the truth were known, you feed me on lotus flowers instead of beef-tea. Admit"—he caught a slender wrist between finger and thumb—"you want to keep me here for ever."

"If only I could," were the unuttered words that rose in her heart, but aloud she only said demurely: "I couldn't, even if I wanted to, keep a hero from the outside world for ever."

"I'm not so sure." Jeffrey Tarnington laughed a little ruefully. "The outside world hasn't troubled its head much about me all these weeks I've been lying here. Even Alicia"—he broke off to stare at a late magnolia still lighting waxen candles on the lawn—"dashed if I can understand Alicia. You're positive she's never been"—his frank grey eyes sought hers perplexed—"when you've been busy, or out, or something?"

She shook her head.

It struck him suddenly that the heat must be trying her. Never before had he known her so pale.

"Nobody's been at all," she said, sticking out a pointed chin defiantly, "except a reporter from the *Haseldon Gazette*. And I told him that you were too ill to be bothered, and would be most frightfully annoyed if they published a word about your accident without your consent. I pretended"—her face flushed scarlet—"that you didn't want people to know you were staying—here."

"But why—why?" Jeffrey stared at her helplessly. "You foolish child"—there was warm irritation in his voice—"what an insane thing to do. That reporter Johnny must have gone away thinking all sorts of things."

"Oh! don't be angry." With a disarming gesture full of grace she dropped on the grass by his side. "I did it for the best. I—I thought lots of callers and telegrams and things would bore you so. Besides, honestly you haven't been well enough. I'm sorry," she added tremulously, "you find it so—dull."

"Dull?" Almost roughly he caught her to him. "You know best if I find it dull," he whispered.

For an instant she rested there, quiet upon his heart, then swiftly, with a little shiver, drew herself away.

"You're not going out?" For the first time he noticed she wore a hat and gloves.

"Only for a little while." She smiled joyously at his dismay. "Your port wine hasn't come from town. It's so stupid not being on the 'phone. I have to go to the village and ring up from there." A little fretfulness crept into her voice. "I hate leaving you," she said, looking back.

"And I hate having you go." He put out a hand detainingly. "Let the port rip, sweetheart," he said coaxingly, "and sit still here with me."

"The doctor said you were to have it." She shook her fair head resolutely. "I shall be back by six, and we'll have a nice little time out here before dinner."

His eyes followed her as she crossed the lawn.

How young and pretty and pink she looked

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in that frock! Impossible to believe she had ever been married before—a mere child like that, her people must have been mad to allow it. Jealously he put the distasteful thought of her first marriage from him; it was no good worrying over it, anyway, now that the poor chap was dead, and, because there seemed nothing better to do, he composed himself to slumber again. Jove! how jolly it was to hear the bees droning! Ripping little beggars, bees—miles better than guns. He closed his eyes lazily.

The drone of the bees seemed suddenly to turn into the purr of a motor-car that stopped at the gate.

"Jeffrey!" A whiff of perfume that wasn't lilac blew sharply across his face. He opened his eyes to see his sister standing beside him.

For a moment he stared up at her vaguely. Then:

"Alicia! By all the gods . . ." He struggled to sit up among his cushions. "So you have come at last?"

"At last!" The pretty dark woman in the smart gown, who represented to Haseldon society the very cream of its social existence, stared at her brother as if she thought he had taken leave of his senses. "You surely didn't expect me to come here—not unless," she caught herself up hastily, "you were dying, and I knew you weren't that."

"Jealous, eh?" her brother said chaffingly. The most modest of men must needs recognise these days the value of a wounded lion to any establishment.

"Jealous?" His sister caught him up with a cry of disdain. "Jealous of that woman? Jeffrey, you must be mad! As if any decent woman could run the risk of meeting her. I only came this afternoon"—her red mouth tightened primly—"because I passed her just now in the village, and I knew it was safe."

"That woman!" A frown gathered on Jeffrey's forehead. There were limits even to jealousy, he reflected. "Are you referring to Mrs. Campbell by any chance?" he asked with dangerous quiet.

"Mrs. Campbell!" His sister fastened on the name derisively. "She isn't Mrs. Anybody. She just lived down here with a married man. He died, and his wife heard and came down. That's how we found it out. That's why I wrote to you when I heard you were better"—her voice rose shrilly—"because I knew she would never have the cheek to tell you herself."

So she *had* written.

The sunshine seemed suddenly very cold to Jeffrey, lying there.

"Why should she tell me anything?" He looked at his sister gravely. "I was the veriest stranger to her. What right had I to her confidence?"

"But didn't you think it strange"—said his sister, regarding him curiously—"nobody writing or calling, and you the lion of the neighbourhood?"

"I'm afraid I didn't worry much about the neighbourhood"—Jeffrey's voice was grim—"although I admit it struck me as strange that you should trouble so little about me."

"But I did trouble." Alicia stared at him reproachfully. "I couldn't come, of course; Frank wouldn't hear of it. But I wired at once when I heard, and sent to inquire every day. Do you mean to say you didn't know? Why, I don't believe you ever got my letter, even. Oh!"—her indignation almost choked her—"that woman's capable of anything!"

"I never said anything of the sort." Jeffrey looked up quickly. "You're altogether wrong, Alicia."

But his eyes seemed to avoid her bright, shrewd ones.

His sister contemplated him gloomily. At last:

"I don't believe it," she said vigorously. "You always were a chivalrous idiot, Jeffrey. You're trying to shield her even now, when she's deceived you so abominably—done her best to make you fall in love with her, I shouldn't wonder." Her eyes grew shrewder than ever as they searched the face before her hungrily.

But the stillness of it never altered as he answered dully, with the faintest inflection of irony beneath the quiet:

"And supposing I told you the boot was on the other foot?"

"Jeffrey!"—anger, incredulity, amazement struggled for supremacy in Alicia's voice—"you've never been fool enough to go and fall in love with her?"

But Jeffrey was looking at the watch upon his wrist.

"It's nearly six now. I expect Mrs. Campbell back every moment," he said evenly. "So, unless you've changed your mind about meeting her, Alicia——"

"Goodness, no! I must go." His sister rose hastily. There was distinct nervousness in the glance she shot about her. "Frank would be so annoyed if I had to speak to her." She dropped a hasty kiss upon her brother's cheek. "Don't say I haven't warned you, that's all," she adjured him. "You'd better come to us as soon as you're able. Don't bother to write or anything; your room will be ready."

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He opened his eyes to see his sister standing beside him. . . . "Alicia! By all the gods . . ." He struggled to sit up among his cushions. "So you have come at last?"

With a swish of silk petticoats and a clatter of the gold things swaying from her waist, she was gone, with a haste that nevertheless contrived to give an impression of cool gracefulness to the onlooker.

But Jeffrey's eyes were shut and his brows drawn together in a frown of pain.

So that was his Rose! A home-breaker instead of what he had dreamt her to be—the perfect home-maker. Almost a groan broke from him as he thought of all her dainty fairness, her laughing gaze, innocent as a child's, those little, exquisite, pale hands of hers.

Drearily he opened his eyes and looked again across the lawn. No little feet pattered across it now. In the long days he had lain there he had grown to connect the rustle of the wind in the trees with the sound of the little feet made by the dream children that, if Life was kind, might one day come to him and Rose.

But there would never be anything but the sound of the wind in the leaves now. The garden-gate clicked sharply as it fell behind someone, and, almost before he knew it, she was there.

"So she's told you?"—two red spots burnt like lamps in her cheeks as she came up and stood before him—"what I've been—what"—her voice faltered dully—"I've done?"

Strange that it should have been his gaze that feared to meet hers.

"Yes."

"What did she tell you?" There was no faltering in her voice now. Rather it rang hard like a bell as she came up closer and closer to him—so close that he could see how the pink folds of muslin fluttered on her breast. "That I lived with a married man? But she didn't tell you why. No, of course she didn't. She couldn't." A queer note of triumph rang through the defiance

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in her voice. "Because she didn't know. Nobody knows except"—her voice seemed to snap suddenly—"except me."

He looked at her standing there, both hands folded across her breast now as if to guard its secret, and for her very beauty—the beauty that would make it so hard for him to forget—hated her more than for her fault.

"Well?" he said hardly.

But she did not seem to hear him. Her eyes were looking away beyond him into that part of her life into which no love of his, even if he wanted it to, could ever penetrate.

"It all began three years ago. I was governess to their little girl. They weren't happy together—she was so proud and hard. She only lived for the outside world, while he—he wanted a home. . . . He asked me to leave everything and go away with him. But I wouldn't. I didn't love him, you see, apart from the wrong of it. And then the war came, and he went. And he came back—blind. There were other things as well. One side of his face was dreadfully scarred; his wife couldn't bear to look at him. And there was something internal, too——"

She cried a little even then at the horror of it all, and the man upon the invalid chair watched her strangely.

"Go on," he said hoarsely.

"And she refused to live with him." A proud disdain swept the tears from the girl's voice. "She said he made her ill. So when he left hospital—he hadn't long to live, the doctors said—I came down here with him." Her eyes left the past and came back to him proudly. "But we never did anything to be ashamed of, never anything the whole world might not know. . . . He only lived six months. But when he died, he thanked me for the six happiest months of his life. That's what I did." She flung her golden head back defiantly. "That's what I'd do again for a man who had done what he did—for England."

Proudly she unfolded her arms from a breast that had yielded up its secret and looked at him.

"Now what have you got to say?"

She thought of many things in that moment he might say, words of condemnation, of wrath, worse perhaps of all, words of pity.

She thought of that first morning he had called her by her name, how all that life should mean to a woman had seemed to begin for her when he had looked from her to the roses she carried and said with a faint tracery of laughter overlaying the tenderness of his voice: "Good morning, Rose!" And then suddenly he spoke, and the words he said were so amazing that, for a moment, her senses whirled.

It was three words only, the three words she had never thought to hear again, and not only the words, but the way in which he said them turned her grey world to gold:

"Good morning. Rose!"

And although for the rest of the world it was the sunset hour, for the two of them there upon the lawn I think it was the dawn.

MOODS.

What makes the world so grey?
  t's a clinging, enveloping pall—
One can only say, in expressive way:
  "Like nothing on earth at all!"
And if you're a man you curse,
  And if you're a girl you cry!
For there's something you've got,
And you don't know what,
  And you wonder the dickens *why!*

What makes the world so bright?
  It's a golden wisp of a thing—
As gossan er light, or the veil of night,
  And fleet as a bird on the wing.
But its music makes you sing,
  And its rapture makes you smile—
For there's something you've got,
And you don't care what—
  But you hope it will stay awhile!

Gwen Nisbet.

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The Partners of Famewater

By H. Mortimer Batten.

"You're my friend—
What a thing friendship is, world without end!"

What the quarrel was really about no one ever knew. Probably neither Stathway nor Corson could have told you just how it began. The heat had been abnormal, and the flies that season were a nightmare, and it is not entirely off the boards that these elements of discomfort had something to do with the case.

It was a golden July evening when Stathway stormed out of the shanty, vowing he would never enter it again. Corson followed him across the clearing, both men raving like lunatics. Then, as Stathway gained the trail which led down to the landing-stage, a shadow slipped from the bush between them—a little yellow dog which looked from one to the other as though undecided which to follow.

Both men fell silent. The dog had shared their lives for five years of prosperous partnership, and now it seemed from her lingering, hesitating attitude that she knew she must go to one and leave the other.

The eyes of the partners met.

"My dog!" Stathway shouted fiercely.

"She's mine!" stated Corson in his quiet, determined voice.

Still the little cur hung between them.

The look which passed between the two men was not pleasant to contemplate. It was Stathway who broke the silence, but there was no anger in his voice. He spoke deliberately and with terrible earnestness, his hand falling limply to his belt.

"Corson," he said, "if you rob me of my dog, I'll shoot you dead!"

Corson's teeth were clenched, but the strong, handsome face never flinched.

"Suppose we leave Jess to decide for herself?" he proposed. "You call her and I'll call her. The one she goes to has her for keeps."

Stathway lost no time in carrying the suggestion into practice. "Jess!" he cried. "Here, Jess!"

Jess looked at him, then at Corson.

"Jess!" said Stathway's partner quietly, and Jess turned and trotted towards him.

A terrible light came into Stathway's eyes,

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a savage curse broke from his lips. He tore the revolver from his belt and fired—not at his partner, but at the dog—and as the bullet shattered a chunk of quartz under her flank, Jess leapt aside with a painful yelp.

Then, as Stathway stood, the smoking revolver in his hand, Corson strode towards him. Corson had not drawn his own weapon, and as he came on Stathway again levelled his revolver.

"Stop!" shouted Stathway. It was both a command and a challenge, but Corson took no heed.

"Stop! For heaven's sake, stop!" It was now almost an entreaty, but without haste, staring into his partner's eyes, staring into his partner's smoking revolver, Corson came straight on.

Stathway's hand trembled, and the heavy weapon wandered from its mark. His face turned suddenly pale, and as Corson caught his upraised hand his wrist fell limply. Next instant Corson had disarmed him and flung the weapon disdainfully into the bush.

Now, to disarm a man is an insult which cannot easily be forgiven. Shoot him if you like, partially disable him, and in time the injury may be pardoned, but to disarm him and throw away his weapon is a slur of lasting contempt on his manhood.

No more was said, but as Stathway strode on towards his canoe the glance that passed between them was sufficient.

When the sun went down upon the Famewater Claims, the lengthening shadows fell across the bowed figure of a strong man who sat by an empty trench, his head upon his knees, while at his side a little yellow dog looked up at him with sad inquiry.

II.

In the Bullion Saloon, Golden Creek City, that night, Stathway, assuming an air of boisterous indifference, announced the fact that he and Corson had parted.

The rustling from the direction of the card tables ceased as the news was whispered and re-whispered, for that two men of excellent character, partners of long standing and apparently devoted, should suddenly declare themselves separated for life was hardly in accordance with the common run of things at Golden Creek. Quarrels were numerous, but they were of an order which begins with loud swear words and finishes with two revolver shots and one wounded man, who was then tenderly nursed back to health by the partner who had shot him.

"Yes, gentlemen," Stathway repeated, "we've dissolved partnership, so either Corson buys me out or the claim goes up for sale."

It is to be feared that things became somewhat boisterous in the Bullion Saloon that night, and in the small hours Stathway, an immaculate figure in his khaki cottons, stood up on the counter and announced that the property was to be put up by auction—right here and right now! Someone raised a technical point as to the legality of the proceeding, to which Stathway replied that *he*, as senior partner, had a perfect right to sell the property.

The result of the bidding was rather surprising. Ragged, bearded woodsmen, who wore wrinkled moccasins and tattered clothing, competed as though toying with dimes till Timmons, the wealthy mine-owner, tipped the beam at fifty thousand dollars.

"There's one man up against you with fifty-one thousand," announced Stathway. Timmons bid fifty-two, at which his mysterious competitor bid fifty-three.

"Why don't he shout it out like a man?" inquired the millionaire, becoming irritable.

"He prefers to remain anonymous," replied Stathway calmly.

"Then he can have the blooming property," announced the mine-owner, sitting down with a thump.

Next day Corson received his ultimatum in the following wording:

The market value of the Famewater Claims is fifty-three thousand dollars. It is for you to decide whether you will pay your partner half that amount and remain in possession, or whether the property goes to the bidder.

Corson paid without a murmur.

A few days later Stathway and Timmons met in the main avenue.

"Say, old man," began Timmons, "who was the mysterious bidder I was up against the other night?"

"Your humble servant," replied Stathway with a flourish.

Timmons stared.

"You mean to say we were knocking up the price against each other?" he stammered.

"The very same!"

"Phew!" murmured Timmons. Then he added a shade maliciously: "You bid two thousand more than the property was worth—you blame idiot!"

"Perhaps so," agreed Stathway calmly. "That two thousand, you see, was for a dog, which goes as part of the goods and chattels."

Again Timmons said "Phew!" But when it became known that it was Stathway himself who—apparently with no other object than that of making his partner pay through the nose—had run up the price of the property,

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the general feeling was that he had played it pretty low down on Corson. It was murmured further that when next Corson and Stathway met things might be expected to happen.

They met on the steps of the Recorder's Office a fortnight later, and, not a yard separating them, each drew his revolver. Both were known to be fairly expert with *their* guns, and they fired simultaneously. Stathway's shot broke a window in the Chink laundry across the avenue, Corson's shot passed clean through the Recorder's Office and buried itself in the garbage heap behind. When the smoke cleared the partners were observed walking in opposite directions, each plucking spots of smouldering felt from his clothing, while between them, whining and looking after Stathway, was a little yellow dog.

They had missed each other, not by inches, but by feet!

III.

Stathway built a shanty on the outskirts of the camp and set himself up as general portage contractor. He was doing well. Each week his stud of horses was added to, and his bright yellow carts became a feature of Golden Creek. It was Stathway who built the new schools in the road that bears his name. It was Stathway who bought the Bullion Saloon and converted it into a Wesleyan Chapel, which he himself never visited. But it was said by his friends that Stathway was a changed man. He was impatient with his employees, and the sinful portion of the populace realised the error of their ways when they were brought before the Vigilance Committee which Stathway instituted. He himself was merciless.

As for Corson, it was rumoured that he had made a fatal mistake in buying out his partner at so high a figure. The claim was not paying, and one wonders whether that was why Stathway built the Famewater Road, which enhanced the value of adjacent property so enormously.

But there were other rumours afloat regarding Corson too painful to relate. One can at least relate facts. It was observed that he ceased to shave, that his clothing assumed the semblance of the bark of a tree—that, like many strong men, he turned to weakness as time and again Fate baffled him.

Things move quickly in the West, where cities spring up in a week and are razed in an hour, and the great fire of August 12th, with its appalling loss of life and property, wiped the environs of Golden Creek from the earth's surface as figures are wiped from a slate. Stathway, whose wealth was in his stock, lost everything. His carts, out on the forest trails, were whipped up by the holocaust, his motor-boats on the creeks, though they performed heroic rescue work, met a similar fate. Stathway was ruined!

The morning succeeding the fire, ere he knew his loss, while the smoke still obscured the sun, Stathway, in his shanty—his last remaining possession—was wakened by a scratching at the door. As he flung it open he beheld, in the ghostly light, a little yellow dog fawning at his feet.

"Jess! My Jess!" cried Stathway tenderly; then, as he ran his fingers through her scorched and matted hair, a sudden fear came upon him.

"Jess," he muttered hoarsely, "why have you come to me? Where is your master?"

A minute later Stathway, still trembling, hurried from the hut and down to his canoe. He took up his paddle, the exhausted Jess curling at his feet, and pushed off down the smoke-shadowed creek. And scarcely had he gone when the Vigilance men landed, and finding the hut deserted took possession of it. An hour later Stathway's name was added to the long list of the missing pinned up outside the Post Office.

Along narrow creeks, between smouldering underbrush, startling the moose that cowered by the margin, Stathway made his way to the claim where Corson and he had lived in peaceful prosperity. As he landed he saw that the fire had swept this point with its fullest fury. A pile of smouldering logs was all that remained of the hut, and on every side lay a desolation of charred timber.

"Corson!" shouted Stathway. "Hi, Corson!"

Only the empty echoes came back in answer. Jess slunk to the top of an adjacent mound and whined. Stathway decided not to look beyond that mound, and by the smouldering ruins he seated himself, his hands clasped, his gaze fixed on the terrible scene.

At length Stathway rose, his long black hair tumbled over his forehead, his broad shoulders drooping. He left the clearing in loneliness, for Jess, standing at the crest of the mound, a pathetic little figure amidst the black abandonment, merely whined and looked dejected when he called.

That morning Corson, having escaped the fire by a very close call, made his way to Golden Creek to exchange his scorched rags for new clothing. He told himself that it did not matter to him how Stathway had fared, but it was strange that his first errand lay in a direction which led him past the Post Office.

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Those who were present when Corson read the list said that he merely clutched the hem of his tunic and turned hurriedly away. Gaining his canoe, he made his way to Stathway's shanty, where he found the Vigilance men in charge.

"No," they told him, "Stathway has not been seen." It was feared the fire had caught him out on the trails!

On the creek, midway between the Famewater Claims and the city, the two men met. Their canoes almost collided at a bend in the waterway, and each regarded the other as though he beheld a ghost. Yet, as they stared into each other's eyes, no recognition passed between them. Each waited for the other to speak, to nod, to give some friendly sign, and so the canoes glided silently opposite—and passed!

IV.

That autumn Corson struck the pay streak. He awoke, as it were, to find himself a millionaire. Then came the rush, and the final settlement of the new mining camp of Famewater. In a month a city had sprung up in the midst of the forest, and the din of vast machinery broke the quietude which once the partners had known.

Corson was lord of that city. It was *his* city. Men doffed their caps when he entered the saloons, but it is to be feared that Corson's camp was not a clean camp. It had its rotten quarter amidst its newness, like a disease on the face of its infancy.

It was murmured that Corson had no pride in his city. The man was breaking up, people said. His hair had turned very white of late, and his bewildering success seemed not to interest him. Therefore it occasioned no surprise when it was announced that Corson had sold out to Timmons, and that the former owner had decided to spend the remainder of his days by the solitudes of Basswater Lake.

Perhaps his own foolish pride, perhaps his partner's brilliant success almost on the eve of his downfall, had something to do with Stathway's sudden departure from Golden Creek. He went by the last river boat, leaving no debts unpaid, with the simple explanation that his luck was out, and that he was trying a hand or two down 'Frisco way.

It was in the Constitutional Club, San Francisco, one typical foggy night, that Timmons, the mine-owner, came face to face with Stathway. They greeted each other like long-lost brothers, each noticing the silver threads in the hair of the other, and when they had dined together Timmons leant across the table and touched Stathway's hand.

"Stath," he said quietly, "I think it's time you were getting along to Famewater."

Stathway blew a whiff of smoke into the air with a touch of the old indifference and bravado.

"Not I!" he answered freely. Then he added in a shade gentler tone: "I hadn't no use for him when he was poor. I ain't looking him up now he's made his pile."

Timmons thought of Corson. He knew the loneliness of those who view the world from a pinnacle of dollars. "He wants you, Stathway," said the millionaire presently.

Stathway's eager glance was full of inquiry. "How do you know?"

The millionaire drew a Famewater sample of pure gold from his pocket and absently fingered it. "Because"—he rubbed the sample in his palms—"because he calls for you every time the fever gets him."

"Fever!" Stathway clutched the cloth with crooked fingers, and a green liqueur glass emptied its contents over the virgin whiteness. Stathway's eyes wandered from those of his friend to the stain. His hand moved listlessly to his forehead.

"Yes, Stath—he's a sick man. Didn't you know?"

Stathway was silent. Again the millionaire touched his hand.

"Stath," he whispered, "Corson's sinking. You must go soon."

In the soft light that enveloped them Timmons saw that he had accomplished his aim. He puffed his cigar and sipped his liqueur. His gaze was fixed absently on the hideous gold dragon that decorated the screen behind his friend. "All gold is a dragon!" thought the millionaire, and he looked at the strong man opposite, the man whose face was hidden.

At length Timmons rose. He said that he was going back to-morrow on the night boat, and added: "You, Stath, must come with me."

Stathway also rose. "No," he answered. "not to-morrow — to-night! I'm going to-night—alone!"

V.

It was midnight, some days later, when Stathway arrived at Golden Creek. The bar-tender at the Murphy House said that he was dead-beat and dead-hungry, but ignoring the warning that it was blowing up for a blizzard, he borrowed a pair of snowshoes, his own being broken, and continued his journey to Basswater.

No man living could have held up his naked face to the storm of dry snow which drove like powdered glass down the creek that night, and Stathway, able woodman

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They met on the steps of the Recorder's Office a fortnight later, and, not a yard separating them, each drew his revolver. Both were known to be fairly expert with their guns, and they fired simultaneously. [*Page* 263, *col.* 1.]

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though he was, found himself without landmarks a mile from Corson's shanty. Thus it was that he wandered out into the wind-swept and island-dotted stretches of Basswater Lake.

There were four men at the shanty where Corson lay—a priest, a trained nurse, a half-breed, and the millionaire. It was towards daybreak when the nurse turned impatiently and said: "Turn that dog out." And Jess, who had been whining and scratching at the door, darted into the whirling blackness as the half-breed liberated her.

Thus it was that Stathway, blinded and beaten by the storm, was startled, in the moment of despair, by the touch of a cold muzzle in his hand. Next moment he was on his knees in the snow, his arms round the little yellow dog while she effusively licked his face. "Jess! Jess! My Jess!" muttered the lost man thankfully.

Some time later there was a soft knock at the door of the shanty, and the nurse opened it.

"Who are you?" she asked.

"*His* partner."

Nothing more was needed. Stathway, the snow of the trail still on his clothing, his handsome face bearing the signs of hunger and hardship, was at his partner's side. And his partner, feeling the cold air upon his forehead, opened his languid eyes, and smiled faintly.

"Old man!" said Stathway very gently. He took his partner's hand and swung it back and forth, schoolgirl fashion.

"Old fellow!" muttered Corson.

For a long time that was all they had to say. The storm around the eaves seemed to whisper a soft lullaby. Feathery flakes fell upon the window, the stove ceased to crackle. The blizzard was passed.

"Closer, old chap," whispered Corson, and as Stathway stooped closer he added: "Say, Stath—you've been a long time coming. What about 'Frisco?"

Stathway shrugged his shoulders, and in the strange hush Jess stole up to them, and laid her head on the blankets, looking from one to the other.

"She brought me home, old man," said Stathway, placing his free hand on the head of the little yellow dog.

Corson's grip tightened. "I've been ill a long time, Stath," he muttered as though trying to forget something.

"A long time. But you must get a hustle on now, Jim. There's heaps for us to do in that new city of yours."

To the surprise of the nurse, the doctor, and all concerned, Corson was up and about a fortnight later. And a fortnight later still the two partners, arm in arm, made their leisurely way to Famewater, the city where much remained to be done, and so close to their heels that her nose touched their legs at every stride, trotted the little yellow dog.

BACK TO THE LAND.

Oh, I'd got fed up with farmin', and I thought I'd like to quit,
An' the posters kept a-callin' for a chap to do 'is bit,
So I up an' took the shillin', feelin' mighty big an' grand,
An' I found more fun in soldierin' than workin' on the land.
For I swanked about in khaki, with a swagger little cane,
Instead o' wearin' corduroys, an' livin' in a lane.

My reg'ment was in billets in a place called Aldershot,
An' they marched, an' drilled, an' slanged us, an' they trained us pretty 'ot.
They learnt us how to wag a flag, an' ow to shoot to kill,
Then sent us 'ome to see our folks afore we outed Bill.
An, when 'twas time to go, my Dad come with me to the train,
An' I waved good-by to Mother at the corner of the lane.

Now, here I am a-standin' in a trench of slimy mud,
A-feelin' 'bout like Nosh 'fore 'e drownded in the Flood.
For there ain't no cop in khaki when it's soaked in liquid glue,
An' no-one cares a button if yer puttees is askew.
Oh, I'd 'op it quick from Flanders, with its everlastin' rain,
To be back in good old Blighty, jest a-strollin' down the lane!

Anne Page.

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The Magic of Make-up

by Matheson Lang

Photos *Wrather & Buys.*

Mr. Lang is a master of "make-up," as the above picture showing the popular actor as he is in everyday life, and as he appears on the stage in the widely different parts of Shylock and Mr. Wu, conclusively proves.

Anyone who has seen Mr. Matheson Lang in his wonderful impersonation of the cunning Chinaman, Mr. Wu, will realise his genius in the difficult art of "making-up." In the following article—illustrated from photographs specially taken for THE ROYAL MAGAZINE—the famous actor, who scored such a triumph in *Under Cover*, the famous "crook" play produced at the Strand Theatre, divulges some of the secrets by which he attains his marvellous effects, and gives hints which the ambitious amateur should welcome with enthusiasm.

As an artist takes canvas, brushes, and paint, and creates a picture, so an actor takes his own face and a handful of grease-paints, and creates from these materials a new personality.

"Make-up" is an art, undoubtedly, and one that deserves far greater attention than it receives. I do not say that an actor who understands the magic of "make-up" and its amazing power is bound to be successful, but I do assert—rightly, I believe—that the actor or actress who takes the trouble to master the intricacies of "make-up" is advancing a long way on the high-road to achieving success.

Frankly, though every part of technical stage-work is interesting, I am inclined to accord a very high—if not the highest place—to "make-up." The trouble is to get a player to realise its fascination; once that truth grips him, however, no trouble can be too great where "make-up" is concerned. Take myself as an example. It is really amazing to think that I can sit down before a mirror my ordinary, everyday self, and rise half-an-hour later—a Chinaman, such as Mr. Wu, or a Jew, such as Shylock.

And the transformation is due, primarily, to the application of grease-paint, aided by a wig, and—in the case of Shylock—a beard. But actually the face beneath the paint is unchanged!

Let us take, for the purposes of this article, two utterly opposite types of "make-up," and my own face as the experimenting-ground for complete transformation.

Mr. Wu, a typical Chinaman, and Shylock, a typical Jew, are the two characters I have chosen for this purpose. The photographs illustrating this article show my own face in various stages of transformation, from myself to Mr. Wu, and myself to Shylock. Before going any farther, I should like to point out that the change is made solely by the application of grease-paint. No nose-paste, cheek-paste, or other material for building up, or rather altering, the shape of my face is used. The whole is done by colour, high lights, and shadows, applied in the proper way.

And while mentioning nose-paste, let me tell a little story that illustrates my strong aversion to this very uncertain adjunct to an actor's "make-up" box. In my early stage days, when I was a member of Sir Frank Benson's famous Shakespearian Company,

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one of my parts happened to be Julius Cæsar, in the play of that name.

Being a very earnest young actor in those days, I spent about three hours "making up" for this part, surrounded by portraits and busts of Julius Cæsar. With infinite care I built up a splendid Roman nose of nose-paste, which I moulded over my own nose, and I hoped that I looked a very marvellous Roman Emperor when the work was complete.

All went well until I fell dead in the Senate Scene. As I lay on the ground, Benson (as Marc Antony) bent over me, and happened to lean against my built-up nose! In agony I felt it give—and give again—and I knew that my splendid Roman feature was squashed all over my face. Luckily, Benson realised what had happened, and, to save the corpse of Cæsar from utter ruin, considerately stood between me and the audience until the curtain came down. The incident provided a lesson I have never forgotten, and ever since then I have shunned nose-paste as I would the plague.

By the way, I should like to acknowledge that the wonderful experience I gained as a Bensonian helped me enormously in developing my ability to "make-up" without appearing ridiculous. Playing a different part each night—varying from Bassanio in *The Merchant of Venice* to Old Adam in *As You Like It*, from Romeo in *Romeo and Juliet* to Pistol in *Henry V.*, provided invaluable experience, for which I am deeply grateful.

Brown and yellow shades of grease-paint spread evenly over the face, including the eyebrows, give the smooth, expressionless effect so necessary for Mr. Wu.

New eyebrows are drawn with black grease-paint, while the eyes are left undarkened except at each end——

——and the nostrils widened by means of a colour called lake.

Photos Weather & Rose.

This picture shows half Mr. Lang's face as it really is, and the other half "made-up" for Mr. Wu, while the complete transformation is seen in the picture on page 267.

When I first played the part of Mr. Wu, I got hold of a picture of a bland, smooth-faced Chinaman, a type I considered typical of the man I wanted to represent; then I started to turn my own European countenance into the closest possible likeness of this Oriental gentleman. To do this, I realised that the first step was to secure a perfectly bland, almost bladder-like face, without any lights or shade, and almost devoid of lines.

Using a combination of brown and yellow shades of grease-paint, I began by spreading these evenly over my whole face, including my eyebrows, which had, of course, to be blotted out. Much application of this colour renders one's face quite smooth and expressionless, and then it is time to widen the cheek-bones by means of high lights.

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In "making-up as Shylock the effect to be gained is one of thinness, and the long furrows drawn from nose to mouth——

——and put on the cheekbones give an intensely haggard look, while the eyes are sunk by a judicious application of lake and brown.

I should like to point out that in this Chinese "make-up" the effect was gained by putting high lights (using lighter shades of yellow and flesh colours) on a flat expanse of darker colour — *not* by adding lines or shadows on a lighter groundwork, as in the case of most character "make-ups."

The eyelids are an important part of this "make-up," and must be carefully covered with the groundwork colour, and afterwards high-lighted along the tops, to give a full, slightly puffy effect. The eyes are left undarkened, except at each end; near the nose two downward lines, in black, help to give a slanting look, which is accentuated by upward lines, at the outer edges of the eyes, in the same colour.

Before using black grease-paint to make new eyebrows, which are high and slanting, it is necessary to make sure one's own eyebrows are completely blotted out.

The nostrils are an important factor, as the breadth given here helps to broaden and flatten the nose, which is left just a wide expanse of yellow colour. The nostrils are widened by means of a colour called lake, which is put inside each nostril, to alter its shape, and carried over the nose. The wig goes on last, and is carefully "joined" by means of grease-paint of the colour used for the background, rubbed firmly over the forehead and along the edge of the wig. The picture which shows half my face as it is, and the other half as Mr. Wu, was taken when I had removed half my "make-up." It emphasises particularly the difference in eyes, eyebrows, and nostrils, which form such important parts of this disguise.

I have played Mr. Wu hundreds of times, but I always allow myself a clear half-hour at least to "make-up" for this part, as it is a really difficult process, and needs infinite

Photos Walter & Howe.

The old Jew's lips are painted full and red, and the wispy grey beard and moustache applied with spirit gum, thus completing a disguise which appears to admirable effect on page 267.

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care. A Chinaman, in London, once wrote to me expressing his conviction that I could not be an Englishman, and saying he would never believe I was, until he had actually seen me "make-up" for the *rôle*. In reply, I invited him to my dressing-room one night, and before his eyes I changed myself from Matheson Lang into Mr. Wu, and even then he was scarcely convinced, and went away amazed, muttering "there was trickery in it somewhere." But, like the conjuror of old, I assure you there is *no* deception!

Shylock and Mr. Wu are as far apart as the poles in appearance. Wu is full-faced and bland; Shylock is lean, gaunt, and hungry-looking. Wu's face is broad and fat; Shylock's is long and very thin. Wu's nose is squat and flat; Shylock's is Jewish, and rather attenuated. In fact, the two types are radically opposite! That is why I chose them for this article, in order to get a really effective contrast.

On the wall of my dressing-room at the Strand Theatre there is a black-and-white sketch of the "Jew that Shakespeare drew," which I did myself, when I first played Shylock, as a guide for my "make-up." Into that sketch I tried to put all the warped savage hunger of Shylock's nature, and having done my sketch, endeavoured to re-create the picture on my own face.

To "make-up" as Shylock, I start with a groundwork of yellow and flesh colour to get the parchment-like skin of the old Jew. These colours are spread over the face, and then the lining process begins. In this "make-up," the whole effect of thinness is gained by means of shadows, high lights, and lines.

The lines are made with lake and brown mixed; and the long furrows drawn from nose to mouth, and also put on the cheek-bones, give an intensely haggard look. Make a line in the place it is needed quite firmly; then, with your finger, smear it gently into the colour already forming the background. Never leave a hard line on the face—it must be blended and smeared, till it seems a natural crease, instead of an applied streak of colour.

Hollow cheeks are made by the same colours rubbed together, with high lights of light flesh-colour at the tops to throw them into relief. The nose is made high and narrow by means of similar shadows down each side, which throw the bridge into strong relief; the nostrils are painted in, with lake and brown, and the eyes are sunk by applying the same colours, which are afterwards used to make lines at the corners of the eyes. To gain an effect of reality, the same colours must be used throughout—it is no good "lining" with lake in one place and grey in another; warm shadows are most realistic, and lake, mixed with brown, is best for this purpose.

The lips are important in this "make-up," and I paint them full and red, afterwards adding the wispy grey beard and moustache that give such character to the haggard old Jew's face. This false hair is applied with spirit gum, which is painted on the face, and the hair stuck over it carefully. But the "make-up" proceeds, at first, as though no false hair would be added. The wig goes on last, as before, and must be carefully joined. And in this "make-up," by the way, care must be taken to make the neck and throat thin and lined, by means of the same colours as applied to the face, both for background and lining purposes. It would never do to have a full, smooth throat attached to an old, drawn face!

As you see, the magic of "make-up" consists of painting a picture, with the human face as a canvas, and some grease-paints for brushes. But it needs care—and infinite practice!

Mr Matheson Lang in a very attractive "make-up" as Charles Surface in *The School for Scandal*.

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TERRIBLE TRIFLES

The fear of doing the wrong thing and so becoming a social outlaw is the terror of many a woman's life. While declaring that only those who can boast genius or noble birth, can afford to be a law unto themselves, the author of the following entertaining article gives some golden hints to those agitated ladies who may, for all their care, have unwittingly sinned against the conventions.

By May Edginton.

Life is made up of trifles, someone has told us; and the terror of trifles is the bane of many a woman's existence. To do the right thing has been quite an obsession since the day when Eve started the first fashion in fig-leaf aprons. Mystery usually surrounds the birth of a right thing, but really it is born much in this way:

A Duchess has a brain-wave, in which she invents a bizarre *entrée* dish, or starts the custom of eating dinner backwards, beginning with the savoury and ending with the *hors-d'œuvres*. A few of her intimate friends are allowed to follow suit, but on the whole the secret is preserved jealously from the rank and file, until a weekly paper gets hold of it. Suburbia is infected at once; Mr. Peckham-Rye comes home after a day in the city, and sits down to milk-pudding and stewed prunes first, and finishes with soup, because everybody's doing it now. The august pioneer of the new habit discards it in a rage, and it becomes the property of the proletariat.

That is how it's done.

Consider the horrible lot of the person who refuses or neglects to follow the latest fashion in refinement. Think of the last woman who did Berlin woolwork in Brixton after Berlin woolwork had, for all elect purposes, ceased to exist! Think of the end of the man who for some reason has not awakened to the fact that to have his cards arrayed in Gothic printing instead of correctly engraved, is worse than to be a hostile alien! One means merely internment till the end of the war; the other means outlawry for ever.

A propos of this, there is a story of a man—one of the strong, silent sort, who always become ubiquitous—who rose from very humble beginnings until at twenty-one he had a small business of his own. He then took his aged mother to keep house for him, and promised her no end of a time in local society. The trouble came when local society, which prided itself on knowing what was what, had the formal presentation of its first visiting cards rewarded, in due time, by the sight of the names of Mrs. Brown and T. Brown, Esq., printed on round-edged cards in Gothic lettering.

For some time T. Brown could not understand why his mother was taboo, but after a time a charitable lady, the wife of a master chimney-sweep—who was thoroughly *au fait* with current modes, as she subscribed regularly to all the best weekly sources of information not exceeding one penny—took the old lady aside, and explained her error to her, promising to use her influence on her behalf if the matter was rectified.

Mrs. Brown and her son fell into line at once, but being one of the strong, silent

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Should a Duchess start the custom of eating dinner backwards, beginning with the savoury, and ending with the *hors-d'œuvres*, everyone else immediately follows suit, whereupon the august pioneer discards the habit in a rage.

brand, the affair burnt into his brain. It did not cool for some time, and when it did, he just laid it up there in cold storage.

He became the owner of a huge business, with branch shops in every town of importance; and after his mother's death he took a mansion near his native place, married the daughter of an impoverished Earl, and made huge settlements upon her, on the condition that her visiting cards and note-paper were to be printed, and not engraved and stamped, in Gothic lettering.

The cards and note-paper of so great a lady could not be questioned. They were the sensation of the year, but her lead was followed. The town went mad on Gothic lettering; as for stamped note-paper, it was considered to be plebeian display. This is how T. Brown, being of that brand, had his revenge, but it does not often work out like that.

People need a superhuman strength to resist the call of social tyrannies if they are ordinary people and not qualified in one of the three following ways for total exemption: (a) They may be of a higher social standing than their would-be judges, like the wife of T. Brown. (b) They may be superlatively rich. (c) They may have a reputation for cleverness.

It is a well-known fact that a millionaire may dress in clothes which his poorest relations dare not even possess; that a duke may wear checks louder than the traditional "bookie," and yet maintain good form; while as for a genius, there is no limit to what he may or may not do. He may wear his bathing-suit to a fashionable garden-party, merely remarking that the weather is rather hot, or ally his oldest silk hat to his newest brown boots, or eat winkles with a pipe-cleaner. Positively, he may do anything.

But ordinary people are born to serfdom, and live in fear.

The chief anxiety rests with women. One needs a swift mind to follow the subtle changes of the hour.

There is the example of Mrs. Simson, a lady who, in her young married days, was the smartest of the smart in her suburb. She spent most of her spare time elegantly designing and embroidering new table-centres, the beauty of which gave her a great *cachet* in her circle. Her Papa and Mamma had always brought her up with a table-centre to look at every meal-time, and she knew how things should be done. She once withheld the light of her social approval from a young bride who, returning her first call, and seeing her engaged upon her newest table-centre, gave herself away hopelessly by inquiring what such a necessary article for refined tables was.

Now, Mrs. Simson was obliged suddenly to tear herself up from her social roots and go to live with Mr. Simson in the backwoods.

They stayed there ten years, when she returned, a widow, to the amenities of her former life, but in a new neighbourhood.

The first thing she began to do was to pen-paint a table-centre.

There is no limit to what a genius may or may not do. He may wear his bathing-suit to a fashionable garden-party, and still be considered good form.

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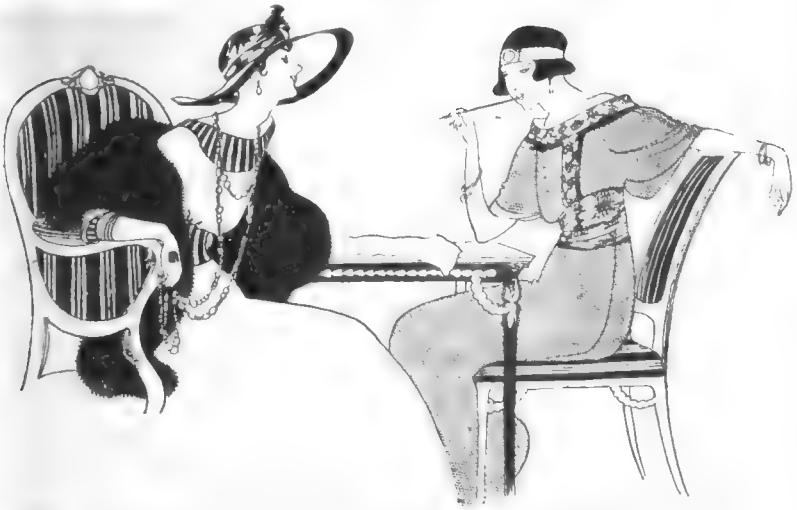

Mrs. Simson, returned to social life after ten years in the backwoods, began to pen-paint a table-centre. Her first caller regarded it with languid interest, drawling: "Are they still used in the backwoods? I gave all mine to my coalman's wife years ago."

Her first caller happened to be the aforementioned bride, who also had changed her address.

The caller looked with languid interest and a faint contempt at the work in Mrs. Simson's hands.

"What is that?" she drawled. "A table-centre? Are they still used in the backwoods? I gave all mine to my coalman's wife years ago. No one thinks of using them now."

Mrs. Simson was nearly bowled, but not quite. She saved herself. She said:

"Of course, dearest Mrs. Smith. I am doing this atrocious article for my maid, who is getting married soon. That kind of person likes this kind of thing."

It is a pity, from the point of view of the zealous follower of fashion, that society relegates this and that tremendous trifle to its lumber-room so quickly, quietly, and without warning. It is asserted by some that society does this out of a just revenge, but it makes life a little difficult for all those anxious ones who, never in the first flight and indifferently mounted for such a chase, can only follow hard after. They have never yet got away quick and clean in the first burst. All they can do is to pound along, looking piteously for a lead and taking falls bravely. It is no use being faint-hearted if you are hunting the right thing.

A great stunt, if you have committed—unwittingly, of course—a dreadful solecism, is to do it again, and then again, and keep on doing it till people wonder if, instead of being a sadly ignorant person, you are not a brilliant soul in advance of your time. They

Doilies merely puzzled the Countess, whereupon a minx whose stall was stocked with them hastily printed a notice which filled the great lady with hope. "What have you here?" she demanded. "Dogs' table-napkins and tablecloths," replied the minx.

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may then begin to follow, instead of to ostracise, you. This requires nerve, but it can be done.

Still, often there is no way but an ignominious retreat from some *cul-de-sac* into which you may have strayed.

Sometimes a whole enterprise is thrown into confusion by some such difficulties as those narrated above, and here is a case in point:

Dozens of bazaar-loving ladies had organised, very carefully, a most select bazaar. It was to be even more expensive than usual, and a Countess was to perform the opening ceremony. For six months all the talented fancy-workers of the district were engaged feverishly in doing their own peculiar intricate stitching. Some hemstitched and some drew threads, and some did raised embroidery and some did flat, until when the day came, and the room was decorated, and the stalls hung with choice specimens of needlework, and the stallholders had put on their new dresses, every heart concerned in the affair beat high with pride.

The great lady entered, and, in a few gracious words, declared the waiting bazaar open. All hung back for her to make the first purchases, for it would not do for some lowlier buyer to snatch from her the opportunity of obtaining all that she wished. The great lady advanced and raised her lorgnette and looked carefully around. She commenced a painstaking search, and on all hands stallholders, eager to help her, stretched out samples of their wares.

She inspected many things, puzzled. "What are these?" she asked at last.

"Doilies," she was told. "And here are more doilies; and there are some more."

"They are of no use to us," said the great lady; "we should not know what to do with such things."

An aghast silence fell upon the roomful, and a horrified glimmer of understanding began to dawn. Was it possible that quietly, even while they worshipped it, the doiley had gone out? The moment promised to be a most poignant one, and just as it seemed that there was nothing chastely plain enough for her ladyship to buy save the few kitchen dusters contributed by the gravedigger's wife, the minx of the neighbourhood saved the situation.

The minx had been planted at the littlest, humblest stall, at the end of the room. She also was stocked with doilies and their companion wares, the table-centres. While the Countess had been looking about, the minx, seizing upon the difficulty, had hastily printed, in bold black, a notice:

"EVERYTHING FOR FIDO."

This she hung before her stall, and the great lady, turning towards her, was illumined with a gleam of hope.

"What have you here?" she demanded, diving for her purse.

"Dogs' table-napkins and tablecloths," replied the minx, flinging with a careless hand a set of doilies, with centre to match, before the aristocratic customer.

The Countess bought the stallful, with cries of delight, and asked the minx to tea.

A moment or two before it had seemed as if all the beautiful work in that room must be sacrificed upon the ruthless altar of the right thing, that each lady, going home, must cast upon the fire the emblems of a now defunct fashion. But salvation had come. The idea worked. There was not a destruction of doilies, but a great purchase, and an elegant education, of dogs. Toy Poms did not mind so much, but when it came to great St. Bernards and boarhounds being degraded to a tortuous civilisation——

However, someone must suffer, and this time they tried it on the dog.

"SEND US THE 'ROYAL'!"

"The good old ROYAL is always ahead with the 'Tommies'!"

This is only one of the many appreciative comments of the fighting men who look to the ROYAL to cheer up their dull moments, and to you to see that they get it.

Your part is so simple. Just hand as many copies of the ROYAL as you can collect over the counter at any post-office, without wrapping of any kind, and they will be distributed among the troops to the very best advantage.

Remember Sir Douglas Haig himself wrote to urge all those at home who have been accustomed to buy books and magazines in the past to continue to do so freely, if possible in increasing numbers, and having read and enjoyed them to pass them on as freely for circulation among the troops.

"Tommy's" leisure is often of the spasmodic order, and that's why short stories and brief, breezy articles are the very thing for him. He will fight twice as well if he is in good spirits, so—well, it's up to you, isn't it?

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Private Blundell—Stretcher-Bearer

By Ralph Durand.

"Great deeds cannot die:
They with the sun and moon renew their light
For ever, blessing those that look on them."

I.

"Prisoner and escort, halt! Left turn!"

Captain Martin, Officer Commanding "A" Company of the 15th Battalion Royal Musketeers, was ploughing through arrears of company work in a billet near the line. He sat uncomfortably on an oil-drum before a rickety table laden with crime-sheets, acquittance rolls, copies of Battalion orders, and printed tracts on a variety of subjects, from frost-bite to the care of anti-gas helmets.

A ground sheet, draped over a large shell-hole in the wall, afforded little protection against an ice-cold draught. The general discomfort in which he was working somewhat ruffled a naturally placid temper, and the necessity of laying aside his other work to sit in judgment on one of his beloved men irritated him still more. The Company Sergeant-Major grabbed off the prisoner's cap and formally introduced him.

"878 Private Blundell, Stretcher-Bearer, sir."

"Private Blundell, you are charged with refusing to obey an order and using insubordinate language towards a warrant-officer," said Martin, glancing at the charge-sheet that the Sergeant-Major laid on the table in front of him. "First witness, Company Sergeant-Major Pigeon."

The Sergeant-Major took as much of a pace forward as the confined space would allow, saluted, and told his tale.

"Sir. Last night I told Private Layton to bring me the Company stretcher. He returned without the stretcher, and told me that Private Blundell had made his bed on it and would not let him take it. I took Private Layton with me as witness to the stretcher-bearer's billet and demanded the stretcher. Private Blundell refused to hand it over, and, when I remonstrated, called me 'a blear-eyed rum-stealer.'"

The sound of a muffled chuckle interrupted the Sergeant-Major's statement. Captain Martin glared fiercely at the member of the prisoner's escort who seemed to have been guilty of the noise, but the man stared straight in front of him at a fly-blown certificate hanging on the wall, which testified to the fact that one Yvette Marchand, presumably a pre-war occupant of the house, had been confirmed.

"What did you want the stretcher for?" asked Martin.

"I was checking the Company Stores," lied the Sergeant-Major glibly, and continued: "I thereupon made Private Blundell a prisoner and marched him off to the guard."

"Next witness!" said the Captain.

"Private Layton!" called the Sergeant-Major, saluting and stepping back.

Private Layton, who had been shivering outside the door, entered the room, saluted, and fixed his gaze on his Company Commander's cap-badge.

"What did Private Blundell say when the Company Sergeant-Major sent you for the stretcher last night?"

"Said he wanted it 'isself, sir."

As a matter of fact, Blundell had expressed himself very much more forcibly and with profound disrespect to his superiors, but Layton's sympathies were all with the prisoner.

"And did Private Blundell call the Sergeant-Major 'a blear-eyed rum-stealer'?"

"Words to that effec', sir."

"Private Blundell!"

The second witness left the room. The prisoner stood forward and stated his case.

"Sir. The reason that I refused to let Private Layton take my stretcher is because I consider that I'm entitled to it when it isn't in use. My billet is in a cart-shed, and the roof leaks so that the floor is muddy. The Sergeant-Major has a dry billet with a wooden floor, yet he wants to pinch my stretcher! He always wants it when he gets a billet that

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hasn't got a bed in it. It isn't fair, sir. I considered his order wasn't a lawful order, so I didn't obey it."

"Did you use the insubordinate language that the Sergeant-Major complains of?"

"Well, sir, can't a man——?"

"That's enough! Understand this: when you receive an order you are to obey it at once, and complain in a proper manner afterwards, if you choose. You stretcher-bearers have the softest job of anyone in the ranks. When the battalion is in the line you do no sentry-go. If you go out with a wiring-party, you sit comfortably in a shell-hole while others work. I'll admit that when you've got your own job to do, most of you do it splendidly, but at other times you all loaf and grouse and make confounded nuisances of yourselves. If you weren't such a rotten shot I'd return you to ordinary duty. This is the third time in three months that you have been crimed, and I'm going to have you up before the Commanding Officer to-morrow. If it were not for the raid we've got on hand to-night I'd keep you under close arrest. Report at battalion orderly-room to-morrow. That will do."

"Prisoner and escort, left turn! Quick march!" said the Sergeant-Major.

When they had left the room, not feeling too sure that his assigned reason for demanding the stretcher had passed muster, he sought to strengthen his position.

"A nasty, ill-tempered man, sir," he said, "always standing up for what he thinks is his rights. If the food's not quite what it might be, he's always the one to complain; and when the issue of clean shirts was found to be lousy last time the men went to the baths, he went about among the men getting signatures for a petition to some paper about it, sir."

"All the same, Sergeant-Major, there's such a thing as rubbing a man the wrong way, and such a thing as taking an unfair advantage of your position," replied the Captain. "I'm not going to decide which of you has the right to sleep on the stretcher, and if there's any more trouble about it I'll sleep on it myself. Now go and make sure that all the bombs for to-night are properly detonated, and report to me at one o'clock."

II.

The Intelligence Staff of the Army Corps to which the 15th Royal Musketeers belonged was not quite sure which unit of the German army was occupying the trenches opposite the left flank of the British Sucrerie Sub-sector. Orders, filtering through Divisional, Brigade and Battalion Commanders, had therefore reached Captain Martin to take a party over to the enemy trenches and obtain the desired information.

Plans for the operation, down to the minutest detail, had been arranged. The Flying Corps had supplied bird's-eye-view photographs of the trenches to be invaded. From these the Royal Engineers had made maps. From these maps a plan of the threatened trenches, identical in shape, length, and direction, had been marked out on a square mile of open country near the Musketeers' billets, and on this plan Martin and a select party of bombers had rehearsed the attack till each man knew exactly where in the enemy's lines he was to go, and what he was to do when he got there.

The Divisional Artillery had its share in the programme. Throughout the day preceding the attack it was to fire promiscuously at the enemy's barbed wire, wrecking it as far as possible, but giving no indication of a desire to destroy it in any particular place. It was then to devote an hour, from four o'clock onwards, to cutting a broad path through the wire opposite the trench that Martin was to attack. At the same hour Martin's bombing party was to leave billets and march.

At seven o'clock precisely, by which time the party should have reached the British front-line trench, the Artillery was to open rapid fire on every yard of trench that was to be invaded and continue it for exactly thirty minutes. The raiding party meanwhile were to dash across No Man's Land and lie down near the gap in the wire that had been cut for them.

At 7.30 precisely the Artillery would cease fire. The attackers would rush into the German front-line trench. One party would make its way down a communication trench, barricade it at the point where it joined the support trench, and hold the barricade against all comers till recalled. Another party was to work along the German front-line trench as far as its junction with the next communication trench.

Meanwhile two smaller parties were to search the trenches for dead and wounded, and loot from them shoulder-straps, cap-badges, private letters, documents, and anything that would help to identify the unit attacked or afford other information of value.

The plan was as nearly perfect as a plan can be, but it had the drawback, common to all plans, of depending for its success on matters beyond the planner's control.

Five minutes after the battery detailed for the job began to cut a way for the raiding party through the German wire, there broke

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snow was so thick and blinding that the battery observation officer could not note its hits nor correct its aim.

Martin, stumbling through the smother at the head of his men, realised this, and had a dismal foreboding that he might find, instead of a clean-cut path, a tangle of broken barbed wire as impenetrable as if no shell had touched it.

By half-past six the raiding party had reached the front-line trench, and Martin made use of the spare time to take a precaution that he should have taken before leaving billets.

"Go along, Sergeant-Major, and make sure that no man is carrying his identity disc or has any letters in his pocket that may give us away in case he gets snaffled."

"Very good, sir," answered the Company Sergeant-Major, and, knowing that even Company Commanders are liable to error, added: "Beg, pardon, sir. What about yourself?"

"Thank you, Sergeant-Major. I'd better make sure, perhaps," replied Martin, guiltily remembering that his tunic pockets contained papers the lucky finder of which might have been rewarded with the Iron Cross—a letter in an envelope addressed to himself, a diary, and a plan of the British trenches marked "*Confidential. Not to be taken beyond Brigade Headquarters.*" He transferred these to a pocket of his greatcoat, added the identity disc that he wore round his neck, and handed the greatcoat to Blundell, who happened to be near him, saying: "I shall be better without this. Slip along with it to the signaller's dug-out and say I'll call for it on my way back."

"I've examined all the men, sir," said the Sergeant-Major on his return. "Nothing on any of them."

"Right! Now set your watch by mine. You know what to do if I get pipped. Don't waste any time. Get enough identifications, round up any unwounded prisoners, and get back as quickly as you can. Especially don't let any idiot fool about hunting for souvenirs."

No one but Martin and a few senior officers had been told at exactly what moment the raiding party was to quit the British trench. It was, therefore, mysterious that at exactly two minutes to seven German machine guns opened fire on it—not the customary half-belt of hate from one gun at a time at regular intervals, but a steady hail of bullets from at least half-a-dozen guns.

"That's torn it, Sergeant-Major!" said Martin. "If we go out into this we shall catch it in the neck, and if we wait till the strafe is over we shall upset the whole time-table."

"Bullets seem to me to be going a bit high and wild, sir."

"Think so? Then we'll chance it, but we'll have to crawl across No Man's Land instead of doubling. Pass the word along and see that every man understands. I'll give you five minutes, and then we'll up and over."

Had the raiders doubled across the frozen ground according to the original programme, they would have reached the German wire in three or four minutes, and have there awaited the order to advance in cover afforded by shell-holes. If they had crawled across on hands and knees, they might have reached it in fifteen minutes.

But a man who has to squeeze himself between Mother Earth and the track of invisible bullets, flying he knows not how few inches above his backbone, does not crawl on hands and knees. He crawls on the inside of his elbows and the inside of his knees, his forearm from wrist to elbow level and his chest scraping along the ground—somewhat like a sea-lion out of water—and thus keeps his body seven or eight inches lower than it would be in the more comfortable position, a margin narrow enough, but one that may make all the difference between life and death.

The allotted half-hour had passed and the supporting Artillery fire had ceased a full five minutes before Martin reached the spot where he hoped to find the gap in the wire. The Artillery had done its work well in spite of low visibility, and only a few strands barred the way. He glanced back at the dim forms writhing towards him, whispered to a Sergeant to let him know when they were "all up," then, drawing wire-cutters from his belt, turned on his back and set furiously to work to clear a passage. A hand grasped his ankle and shook it.

"Who's that?" he whispered.

"Blundell, sir. The Sergeant-Major's wounded. He told me to let you know."

"Right! Go back and get him into the trench."

"Can't, sir. He's hit in the stomach."

"Don't lie arguing there! You know your duty. If he can't walk, you must get another stretcher-bearer and carry him. Come on, men!"

Private Blundell opened his mouth as if to continue the argument, shut it again, muttered something that sounded insubordinate, and crawled away.

III.

An hour later the raiders, very jubilant, pushing a number of almost equally jubilant prisoners in front of them, slithered one by

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one over the parapet into the British front-line trench. Those who garrison a front-line trench walk circumspectly and speak in low tones, keeping their heads down and their ears open for shells; but those who return to it after an excursion "over the top" feel as they jump into it a sense of security as complete as a man accustomed to danger feels by his own fireside at home.

The raiders gathered in groups, most of them displaying a shrapnel-helmet, a cruel, saw-edged bayonet, or some other trophy that he had snatched up before returning, each of them too busily talking to listen to what the next man had to say. And when Captain Martin, the last to return, his pockets bulging with papers and shoulder-straps, dropped into the trench, a dozen hands smacked him on the back and a babel arose. "Well done us, sir!" "Good for the old firm!" "What price the 15th Royal Musketeers!" "'Ow many bloomin' prisoners is it?"

A company of the 10th Berkshire Light Infantry were on duty in the trench that night. They belonged to the same Brigade as the 15th Musketeers, and had drunk with them and fought with them and played football with them ever since the Brigade came overseas.

As the news of the raiders' return spread along the trench, an audience quickly gathered, men not on duty at the moment emerging from shelters and dug-outs to look at the prisoners and demand information.

"Cheero, Martin!" said a Berks subaltern, shouldering his way along the crowded trench. "How goes it?"

"That you, Shaw?" answered Martin. "Shut up, you men, and let's get the roll called. See to it, Sergeant Evans."

"Well, how did you get on?" demanded Shaw.

"Top-hole! We just walked over, helped ourselves, and came back! Every unwounded Bosche we saw surrendered on the spot, pleased as Punch and wanting to shake hands all round!"

"What are their trenches like?"

"Smashed to blazes. And we burnt a couple of dug-outs just to make a job of it. Well, Sergeant Evans?"

"Sergeant-Major Pigeon and Private Blundell missing, sir. Three men slightly wounded, but able to carry on. Otherwise all correct."

"Right! Look here, Shaw. Do you know if our Sergeant-Major has been brought in?"

"Can't have been, I'm afraid. I've been on duty in the trench ever since you went out, and I should have heard about it. I was only relieved ten minutes ago."

"The stretcher-bearer who is missing told me that the Sergeant-Major was pipped, and I told him to get help and bring him in. He must have stopped a bullet himself directly afterwards. Look here! My men have done enough for to-night, and they've got to chaperon the prisoners back to Headquarters. Can you lend me a search party?"

"Of course. The men will enjoy it. They've had nothing to do but blow on their fingers and keep a look-out this trip. There's no wiring to be done and the ground's too hard to dig, so they've had a soft time. I'll see Baker about it. He's on duty now."

"Thanks! I'll take them out as soon as I've sent in my report. Now, Sergeant Evans, I'm staying here. You'll be in charge of the party. March the prisoners to Battalion Headquarters, and see that all the men get a tot of rum before they go to bed. Now, Shaw, I'll just send a message by your signallers, if I may, while you scratch me up a search party."

Shaw, bending low, led the way down a flight of steps into a burrow very nearly as large as a suburban coal-cellar, and lit by a single candle. On one side another subaltern and a signaller snored on layers of sandbags. The other side was occupied by a vacant bed of sandbags, a rickety table supporting a telegraphist's instrument, and a Primus stove on which the telegraphist on duty, his ear-pieces strapped to his head, was warming up supper of Machonochie ration. The air was heavy with the smell of damp earth, tobacco, paraffin, and Irish stew. On the subaltern's order the signaller suspended his cooking arrangements, picked up a pencil, and wrote to Martin's dictation:

M. 73. To Lobster. Have to report return Ack, Ack. Ack. I am sending seventeen prisoners with party under Sergeant Evans, who will also hand over all identifications secured. Ack. Ack Ack. Casualties: Sergeant-Major Pigeon, missing believed wounded; Private Blundell, missing. Ack Ack. Ack. I am going out with search party. Ack Ack. Ack. Lobster. Crab Headquarters Delaney Trench. J. Martin, Captain. Twenty-seven Over Sixteen. Eighty thirty pip emma.

"Get it through as soon as possible, please."

Shaw meanwhile, after rummaging in a corner amongst tin plates and groceries, had produced a stone jar, a couple of mugs, and a waterbottle.

"You'll have a drink, won't you, Martin?" he asked, as the signaller began tapping out the message. "Sorry you had the last of the whisky, but there's some rum here. By

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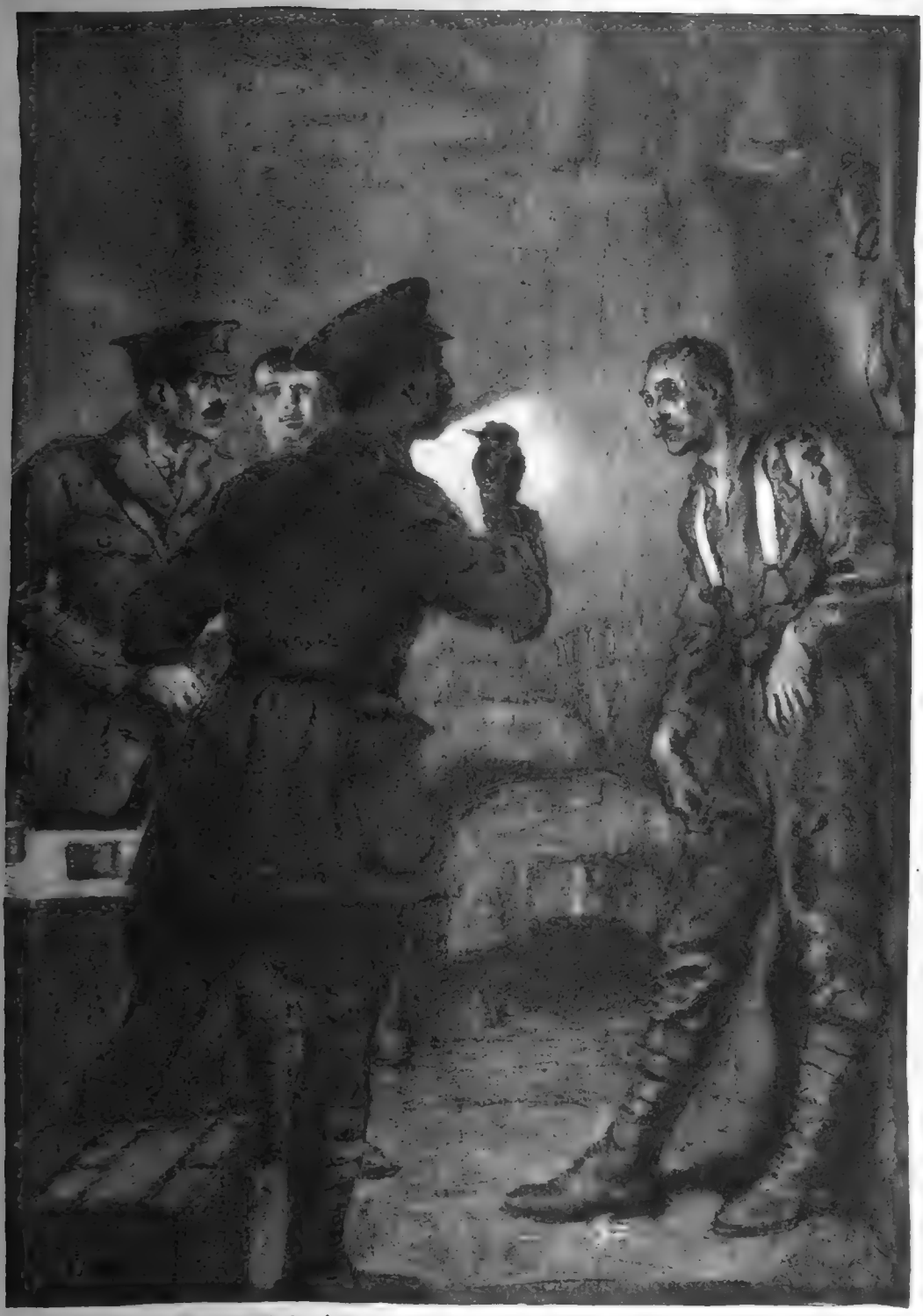

Just as they were lighting their pipes they heard a slow, dragging step on the stairs, and a bowed figure stood indistinct in the gloom. "What the deuce!" exclaimed Shaw. "Who's that? Why! what have you done to yourself?" He snatched up the torch and switched it on to a man . . . who leant limply against the side of the dug-out, shivering and moaning and gibbering incoherently.

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the way, what on earth did you want that whisky for?"

"What whisky?" demanded Martin, turning grateful attention to the rum.

"Why, one of your stretcher-bearers came in about an hour after you had started, and said that you had sent him to borrow some whisky and get the greatcoat you left here before you started over the top. I wondered what you wanted 'em for, but was too busy to ask."

"Deuce take it!" exclaimed Martin. "I sent no such message! What was the man like?"

"Round-shouldered; stubbly yellow moustache; bit of a squint."

"But that's Blundell, the fellow I reported missing. I can't understand. He can't have been wounded after all. Which way did he go?"

"Straight back over the top, the way he came in."

"Well, I'm hanged! Look here, old man, buck up that search party, will you? There's some mystery about this."

Shaw stumbled up the steps on his errand, and Martin, staring round-eyed at the candle, racked his brains over the problem. Why had Blundell neglected his orders to bring in the Sergeant-Major? Why did he want the whisky? How did he dare use an officer's name to get it, and why did he take away the greatcoat? One and only one possible answer to the last question suggested itself, though Martin tried to reject it as absurd; yet he could not dismiss it, for it seemed to afford a possible answer to the other three. Blundell was preparing to desert to the enemy.

Blundell had seen him transfer papers to his greatcoat pocket immediately before the raiding party went over the top. Therefore he might guess that those papers were of value to the enemy. By handing them over when he surrendered he might earn the goodwill of the German authorities. The whisky, too, might have been intended to placate the first Bosche sentry he encountered. But why did he want to desert? He was an insubordinate, discontented grouser, labouring under a sense of injustice (the Sergeant-Major had not been quite fair to him), a man with many entries on his crime-sheet, and one who was due to have a bad time at the C.O.'s next orderly-room, with possibly forty days' punishment to follow. If he had deserted it meant he had been able to play a dirty trick, an infamous, murderous trick on his enemy, the Sergeant-Major——

"I have detailed your search party," said Shaw, re-entering the dug-out. "All as keen as mustard. But you can't go out just yet. The Hun has got over the surprise of your visit, and is strafing like blazes. Come and look!"

Martin followed Shaw up the steps to the trench. The sentries on the fire-step were cowering down before a hail of bullets that grazed the parapet and raised a long line of little clouds of dust and powdery snow, and beyond, in No Man's Land, bursting shrapnel groped blindly but impotently for victims. To take men out just then, on the chance of finding a man who might already be dead, and perhaps recapturing a deserter, would be not gallantry, but criminal folly.

"God help the Sergeant-Major," muttered Martin, adding vindictively, "and God help Blundell if I get near enough to put a bullet into him."

It was nearly midnight before the firing died away, and by then a blinding snowstorm was raging. In single file the search party passed through a narrow gap left in the British wire, then formed in extended order to right and left of their leader. It was a gallant but almost hopeless quest. In order to keep touch with each other in the blinding smother the men had to move almost shoulder to shoulder, and could search but a narrow track of ground. Often a man tripped over some snow-hidden obstacle and fell full length. Now and again in the deeper shell-holes hidden ice gave way under a man's feet so that he was soused to the waist. Snow persistently dimmed Martin's compass, and it was more by good luck than anything else that he reached the German wire. Even then the search had only begun. Four times backwards and forwards in wide sweeps they examined the ground, and then the snow ceased falling, the clouds broke up, and the moon breaking through made the party—black figures against brilliant white—so conspicuous that the only safe course for the officer was to withdraw it to the safety of the trench.

Once more when the sky had again clouded over Martin went out, alone this time, searched for an hour, and then—wet through, utterly worn-out, chilled and heart-sick—returned to the dug-out. He swallowed some more rum, dictated a message reporting his failure, and asking leave to stay and make another attempt on the following night, then made himself a bed with sandbags and the signaller's overcoat, and lay down to rest.

It was six in the morning before Martin was warm enough to sleep, and four in the afternoon before he opened his eyes again.

"Here's a message come through for you, sir," said the signaller. "Knowing what it said, I thought it best not to wake you. I'll just slip out and tell them to bring you something to eat. I heard Mr. Shaw tell his

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servant to get dinner ready and keep it hot for when you woke up."

Martin took the flimsy pink paper the signaller handed him, and read:

D. 108. M. 74. Capn. Mar in. Crab H.Q. Delaunay Trench.

Am sending you sixteen good men. A.A.A. Do not venture unless all quiet. A.A.A. Return in any case to-night. A.A.A.

J. Arkwright, Captain and Adjutant.

Lobster.

12 Noon.

Lieutenant Shaw had a sumptuous dinner prepared for his guest that night, on the ground that one can't go monkeying about all night in the frost without a substantial lining. Three soup squares instead of the prescribed two went to make the first course. There followed bottled anchovies. (Shaw had extravagant tastes and loving sisters to pander to them.) Machonochie ration, hot and flavoured with tabasco, formed the main body of the meal. Tinned Christmas pudding and toasted ration cheese brought up the rear of it. The only circumstance that marred the luxuriousness of the dinner was the fact that, as the supply of candles had run short, it had to be eaten by the dim light of a brazier, supplemented, when absolutely necessary, by the help of an electric torch.

Just as they were lighting their pipes they heard a slow, dragging step on the stairs, and a bowed figure stood indistinct in the gloom.

"What the deuce!" exclaimed Shaw. "Who's that? Why! what have you done to yourself?" He snatched up the torch and switched it on to a man, wild-eyed, half-dressed, smeared with blood on shoulder and thigh, who leant limply against the side of the dug-out, shivering and moaning and gibbering incoherently.

"Blundell!" exclaimed Martin. "Where have you been? Where's the Sergeant-Major?"

"Give him a drink first," said Shaw. "Here, man. Lie down on my bed."

"Rub it — hands — chest —" muttered Blundell through chattering teeth, lurching towards the outspread sandbags. "I'm—nearly—whacked."

They laid him down, set the brazier at his feet, and—the two signallers helping—rubbed the fiery spirit on to his chest and the palms of his hands. Presently he sighed contentedly and sat up.

"That's better, thanks. Give me a drink now, sir, and I'll tell you."

He greedily gulped down the rum that Martin poured out for him and began:

"I've been lying out with the Sergeant-Major. I had to because he can't do anything for himself, and gas might have come over or anything. You see, sir, you said to bring him in last night, but he being hit in the abdomen it would have killed him to move him then; that's what the M.O. taught us at the First Aid lectures. I had to keep him warm, too. I kept on rubbing the whisky into the palms of his hands till my arm got too stiff. He'll do fine now, so I came in as soon as it got dark to get help to bring him in."

"But you're wounded, too! When were you hit?"

"Yes, sir, shoulder and thigh. I got 'em both same time as the Sergeant-Major was hit. But they're only flesh wounds. They'll be all right unless the frost has got at 'em. You see, sir, I couldn't ask any of the other stretcher-bearers to take on the job of minding him. It's a bit thick to ask a man to lie out in the snow all night if you ain't going to lie out with him. An' besides—the Sergeant-Major had it in for me on account of that stretcher, as you know, sir, an' I didn't want to seem spiteful-like."

"Well, you won't hear any more about the stretcher affair. I can promise that. But where's your tunic, man?"

"I wrapped it round his feet to keep 'em warm—your overcoat not being long enough, sir. Shall we go out an' get him now, sir, before it comes on to snow again?"

Blundell made an effort to rise, tottered, and sank down on the bed again.

"Maybe you could find him without my coming out again, sir? I'm still feeling a bit whacked. He's only about fifty yards half-left from the gap in our wire. You might follow my tracks in the snow. You'll know 'em by the blood. I started bleedin' when I began to crawl in."

Three hours later Martin saw Blundell and the Sergeant-Major tucked comfortably into the same motor-ambulance, and then, over a whisky-and-soda, unofficially discussed with his Commanding Officer the phraseology in which a recommendation for the Victoria Cross should be written.

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ANOTHER ENTERTAINING STORY OF MR. GUMBLAY.

PENNY · PLAIN

By F. E. Baily.

Mr. Gumblay, invalided o t of the Army, seeks distraction from boredom b/ delicate intrusions into the realms of other people's romances. So that when Miss Ann Sigsbee, a somewhat una tractive lady of thirty-five, rebelled against her colourless existence, Mr. Gumblay, scenting an unrequited attachment, held out a helping hand. How he gave Miss Sigsbee her heart's desire is related in the following delightful story.

I.

Mr. Cyprian Gumblay (invalided) steered his grey, six-cylinder Vauxhall thoughtfully through the tortuous roads of the English countryside. His mind rambled pensively round many topics—the futility of existence, the perversity of woman, the consumption test he was making of a petrol substitute—chiefly because he had nothing better to do. He thought also of three shell-cases which adorned the smoking-room of his Half Moon Street abode. Mr. Gumblay was in the habit of presenting a shell-case, suitably converted by the jeweller into something decoratively useless, to such of his more intimate friends as embarked upon the troubled seas of matrimony. There had been six shell-cases at the commencement.

"I shall keep the last for myself—as a precaution," he murmured, to the edification of Lucas, the impeccable servant, who sat in dignified gloom at his side. "It will be the one stained with German blood, I think. Perhaps some day in the spring I shall marry a blooming girl and be unhappy ever after. Well, it is late winter already. One never knows!"

Thinking these pregnant thoughts, Mr. Gumblay approached, at the moderate and controlled pace of all the better-brought-up motorists, the outskirts of Claybury Parva, which, with Claybury St. Botolph, forms one parish, ministered unto by the same vicar. Mr. Gumblay glanced at a convenient sign-post, the map placed handily at his side in a patent holder, and the speedometer with its record of distance.

"We are a hundred and fifty miles from London," he observed to Lucas. "I think I am nearly fed up with driving. Look in the road book and see if there is a tolerable hotel at Claybury Parva."

"If I might so far presume, I think it would be as well to call an 'alt, Mr. Cyprian, sir," replied Lucas dutifully. "Motoring is an undoubted strain on the driver, sir, and I could wish to see you looking stronger. 'Aving served the family from boy to man, your indifferent 'ealth is a cause of much sorrow to me, Mr. Cyprian."

"Yes, thank you, Lucas. Be sure there is a bathroom, and no mention of special terms to commercial travellers. I want a genuine country inn, you understand."

Observing a female in the distance travelling on foot in the same direction as himself, Mr. Gumblay slowed the car to avoid splashing her, the road being in a moist condition. Unfortunately, a carelessly driven motor-lorry rounding a bend just before he reached her caused him to draw on to his own side of the road; the near wheels passing through a large puddle raised quite a respectable splash, and Mr. Gumblay had the mortification of seeing several stains of liquid mud appear on the lady's skirt.

Stopping the car immediately, he got down and went back to apologise.

"I am exceedingly sorry," he began courteously, raising his hat. "The fact that I was forced nearly into the ditch is no consolation. I hope your skirt is not seriously damaged."

The lady regarded him in astonishment mingled with curiosity.

"You couldn't have thought I was pretty even from behind," she said slowly at last. She was neither fat nor thin, with lifeless-looking hair of a negative fair shade. Her throat had a reedy, unloved appearance, and her hat obviously came from a village milliner. Her coat and skirt belonged to a breed turned out ready-made in thousands, and she carried an umbrella with a crook fashioned to resemble the head of a bird in her cotton-gloved hands. Her age might have been thirty-five; in spite of all this, her eyes held a kind of sharp, almost bitter expression.

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Mr. Gumblay's voice took on a faint chilliness.

"I stopped in order to apologise. Frankly, I did not commit the impertinence of studying your appearance in any way. If you had been a kitchen-maid I could not have done less. As it is, I'm afraid I can't do more, unless you will allow me to give you a lift wherever you are going, so that you can repair the damage quickly."

A faint, painful flush came into the stranger's rather sallow cheeks.

"Excuse me," she pleaded, "I haven't always found men quite so considerate. My name is Miss Sigsbee—Miss Ann Sigsbee. It's very kind of you, and if you would drive me home I should like to offer you a cup of tea. It isn't very far."

Mr. Gumblay bowed and followed his new acquaintance to the car.

"Lucas," he commanded, "swing out the dickey seat, and get in at the back. Perhaps," he went on to Miss Sigsbee, "you will sit in front beside me?"

With the impassive solicitude of the born servant, Lucas assisted the lady to seat herself next to Mr. Gumblay, and closed the door carefully behind her.

"I live at 'The Nest,'" volunteered Miss Sigsbee as Mr. Gumblay took off his hand brake. "It's on the left-hand side of the village green, opposite the church—a little white house."

She leant back against the comfortable upholstery and sighed a faint, greedy sigh as the car moved forward with never a jar or the faintest vibration. It occurred to her that Claybury Parva might not altogether overlook her passage through its midst in so costly a chariot driven by so distinguished a young man, for Mr. Gumblay had the gift of distinction.

With a faint internal fluttering she asked him into the calm depths of her abode. Mr. Gumblay glanced about him with the concealed interest of a polite Columbus discovering undreamt Americas. "The Nest" seemed so suitable. It was a little white-washed, roughcast covered place with green window-frames, a tiled path leading up to the front door through two minute grass plots. A close hedge concealed the windows from the passer-by.

Miss Sigsbee seemed to have inherited all her furniture from dim, religious aunts; her house was full of occasional tables, china-cabinets, oil paintings of people now happily defunct, and what-nots. A young, subdued maidservant brought the tea equipment into a petrified drawing-room. Mr. Gumblay began to feel a little forlorn; all that remained of his own era—Lucas and the car—had gone before him to engage rooms at the "Hand and Spear."

With fingers steeped in resignation, he spread apricot jam on a minute portion of bread-and-butter. Miss Sigsbee watched him, her stony gaze scarcely indicating the storm which raged within her ladylike bosom.

"*This* is my life!" she burst out at last.

Mr. Gumblay almost started. Had she become suddenly unhinged? He smiled bravely, nevertheless, and spoke with soothing intent.

"I find Claybury Parva an extremely charming spot. To me, if I may say so, your life appears cast in pleasant places, and here you have undoubtedly a goodly heritage. There must be, in addition, a fair number of pleasant people in the neighbourhood."

"Claybury Parva is a dead-and-alive hole, the women are a lot of old cats, and 'The Nest' is a living tomb!" retorted his hostess savagely. "Do I seem normally alive and interested in things? Can you imagine anyone troubling their heads twice about me? Could I possibly be called charming and attractive?"

Mr. Gumblay took counsel with his soul.

"Either she is hopping mad, or she seeketh a quarrel with me," he decided. Aloud he said:

"My dear Miss Sigsbee, why do you ask me these questions, which, since I am sitting in your drawing-room drinking your tea, are hardly fair?"

She rose from her chair, took a new art receptacle from a what-not, and offered him a cigarette.

"I smoke," she announced with a kind of grim fury. "No doubt I appear mad as well, but something has to start every great convulsion, my young friend—the wing of a passing bird precipitates the avalanche, the thin crack lets in the beginning of the mighty flood. I am a plain, undesirable woman—I realise it. There are thousands of us. Casual people think we don't mind it, we don't want the things pretty women get, but we do. At some point in our lives we have to settle whether we shall continue to long for the impossible, give up all hope, or drown ourselves. I am going to do none of these things."

"Really," murmured Mr. Gumblay helplessly, "I think you are quite right."

"You have sown the seeds of rebellion by an act of courtesy. You couldn't have done more if I'd been a pretty girl, and, having done so much, you must finish the business. You must help me to get something that matters to a woman out of life before it's too late.

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I'm thirty-five. I've never had anything yet. Do say you will. Do please promise. You can't believe how serious I am. It's difficult for you — young, wealthy, attractive. Well?"

Mr. Gumblay flung away the "Claybury Favourite Special Egyptian" blended by the local tobacconist and lit one of his own cigarettes.

"You know your own circumstances," he said, "and if they are — forgive me — too much for you, how can I, willing as I am, succeed where you fail? These things come from within, not from without."

"I have this house and the furniture, and two hundred and fifty a year of my own. I've just come into a lump sum of three hundred. You can see what I'm like. I can't set London on fire, but surely I could make a bit of a stir in Claybury Parva? The only thing is I don't know how. You do. Tell me; that's all I ask."

Mr. Gumblay considered his hostess very carefully, and, in spite of her clothes and her furniture, there appeared to him something almost heroic in Ann Sigsbee. He smiled his rather charming smile and held out a slender, white hand.

"Let us plan out a campaign," he suggested briskly. "I have a little worldly knowledge that may be useful, and anything I can do is done already. Really we ought to be able to pull off something together."

II.

Mr. Gumblay, sauntering forth one sunlit morning from his comfortable quarters at the "Hand and Spear," clad in admirable tweeds, a faithful briar locked between his teeth, became aware of an exceedingly good-looking flapper who approached with no infirmity of purpose in her young footfall. A battered coat and skirt, elderly brogues, and a slouch hat, that had known rain and wind, could not disguise her evident grace and charm. A mongrel terrier, the friend of all the world, trotted at her heels. She stopped in front of Mr. Gumblay and addressed him in the clear tones of confident female youth.

"Excuse me, but aren't you the man who runs that ripping grey car? My name's Angela Hobun; my father's the vicar, you know — the Reverend Frampton Hobun. I dare say you've noticed his name inside the porch of the church."

Not the ghost of a smile flickered round Miss Angela's delightful mouth as she launched this barbed shaft. Mr. Gumblay removed the pipe, raised his hat, and waited.

"You see we've got a concert for the organ fund on Thursday, and I wanted to ask if you'd be so frightfully decent as to bring over a couple of people who are going to sing for me. They live at Greychester, about five miles away. We haven't a car, and it knocks a lot off the profits to hire. Perhaps you'll come to the concert as well? It'll be awfully stodgy. I hate them myself, but then, of course, I'm obliged to be there."

The lady sighed rather wearily. She was of an age to desire rich, exciting things. Mr. Gumblay smiled upon her the smile of one conspirator to another.

"I'll do anything in the world for you, and the car is yours at any time you like. Perhaps you'd do one or two trifles in return, if I were to ask you?—but not unless you like. Can I have the names and addresses of these minstrels, or whatever they are?"

"Yes, by all means, and thank you so much. It's awfully kind of you. Hullo! who's that woman? We don't often see clothes like those in Claybury. Good heavens! it's Miss Sigsbee!"

For Mr. Gumblay the moment was full of drama. Miss Hobun and he gazed, she with amazement, he with satisfaction, at a tall, fair woman beautifully tailored and hatted, gloved and shod, her hair charmingly dressed, her complexion fresh, who passed on the other side of the street with joy in her step and happiness in her eyes. Mr. Gumblay saluted her, and she gave him a gay little nod in return. He turned again to the astonished face of the Vicar's youngest.

"If you'll go and call on her you'll find she's scrapped all the ghastly furniture and redecorated 'The Nest,' and filled it with chintz covered, comfy things. It's a sort of Cinderella story brought up-to-date. I did it myself, and really I feel a little proud, and I wish I could tell you all about it, only we can't stand here in the street all day, and you mustn't come out in the car because your mother wouldn't like it, and your father would excommunicate me."

Mr. Gumblay let the temptation sink in.

"I don't in the least understand what you're talking about," replied Miss Hobun, "but surely I ought to go over with you to Greychester and introduce you to those people? And then you can give me tea at Garraway's if you like. They have the most ripping cakes there. I don't think mother would object in the least; I assure you I've been used before as a sprat to catch a mackerel where men are concerned. It doesn't matter as long as it's in the name of good works, you know."

"Ah! And what time would you like the car?" inquired Mr. Gumblay thoughtfully.

"Two-thirty, please. After all, we needn't

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In the tasteful drawing-room of "The Nest" two male guests bade farewell to their kind hostess. . . . Mr. Nant, dapper, precise . . . cast upon Mr. Gumblay no very friendly eye as that gentleman lingered over Miss Sigsbee's daintily manicured hand. [*Page 28, col. 2.*]

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go straight there, and if you come for me you can be presented to mother. She's quite a dear, but frightfully overworked and hard up. Good-bye."

All that afternoon the grey Vauxhall posed as a triumphal car of Venus. Finally it fetched up outside of Garraways', the star confectioners of Greychester. Within, the Vicar's youngest let loose on Mr. Gumblay all the magic of her violet eyes, her ripe corn hair, and the experimental coquetries of beautiful sixteen. Being twenty-seven, worn and weary, he watched over her with the tenderest, most appreciative solicitude.

"Tell me everything about Miss Sigsbee, and how it began, and why *you* did it," she commanded, resting the delicate oval of the young face on two slender little hands. "You must have had your pick of all sorts of decent girls—with a car like yours. Can you really be a good young man, Cyprian? I simply must call you Cyprian, it's such a lovely name."

"I had pity on her elderly sufferings, and for a reward the gods sent me Angela," retorted Mr. Gumblay with pious unction. "Remember this is a deadly secret between ourselves. I feel I can trust you. Indeed, I want you to help me to round off the enterprise, and be a little kind in the interval. After all, good deeds are not exciting. You know all the local scandal. Has she ever cast the eye of affection on any worthy citizen of Claybury Parva? It's rather up to me to arrange her marriage. I feel my work would be incomplete without this."

"How did you do it? What did you do to her?" demanded Angela with the swift, imperious questioning of sixteen that knows it is good-looking.

"We shopped in town," said Mr. Gumblay dreamily. "I took her to the right places—dressmakers, tailors, bootmakers, face renewers, and hairdressers. When she almost fainted at the cost of things, I gave her a lunch, where she could see what other women were like, and then we started all over again. Frankly, Angela, I count it unto myself for righteousness. It was a great strain. Now, giving you tea is quite different. It refreshes me. I feel young and attractive again like the poor fool I am."

"What a waste!" stormed Angela suddenly. "She has all those beautiful things, while I——"

She glanced down at the coat and skirt, and almost there were tears in her eyes.

"You have your face, your youth, a certain *gamine* attractiveness," said Mr. Gumblay in tones of extreme dryness. "Really, you've nothing to grumble about. Some day a fairy prince in golden armour will come along on a white horse and gobble you up. Now tell me to whom I shall wed Miss Sigsbee."

"Playing the organ—on which there is a debt—as I do," began Angela sourly, "I see a great deal of what goes on in our humble parish. I have noticed Miss Sigsbee's eyes soften when Mr. Nant, the bank manager, hands her the alms bag. Beyond saying this I will do nothing to help your horrible schemes. Really, Cyprian, you ought to have been somebody's aunt. Give me another of those large curranty cakes, please."

III.

In the tasteful drawing-room of "The Nest" two male guests bade farewell to their kind hostess. The *débris* of tea lay scattered about. Mr. Nant, dapper, precise, yet a very giant among Home Rails and 3½ per Cent. Loans of the City of Tokio, cast upon Mr. Gumblay no very friendly eye as that gentleman lingered over Miss Sigsbee's daintily manicured hand. Mr. Gumblay had taken enormous pains to ingratiate himself with her during tea; Mr. Nant, who had been invited so that Mr. Gumblay might, at his own request, meet the local financier, had seen himself cut out entirely from the graces of Miss Sigsbee. And for some reason which he could not fathom, yet certain West End tradespeople could have explained, Miss Sigsbee suddenly interested Mr. Nant acutely. He longed to know where the difference in her lay; he longed still more to know whence the money came that had transformed her and "The Nest." All at once she appealed alike to his eye and his business instincts. It occurred to him suddenly that love and property, with a bit of luck, go hand in hand, why not?

"My dear Nant," exclaimed Mr. Gumblay when they were outside, "I wish you would dine with me to-night if you are not doing anything more amusing. The fact is I wanted to meet you in order to ask your advice about some investments. My affairs seem going absolutely to blazes lately; everything I touch turns to waste-paper. I've rather a particular reason for wanting matters to take a turn, as it happens. I might—well, I *might* be getting married in the near future." ("I *don't* think!" added Mr. Gumblay privately to his soul.)

A cold hand clutched at Mr. Nant's heart, but he only put upon his face that expression at which cashiers trembled and junior clerks went and hid themselves in the strong-room.

"Thank you, Mr. Gumblay, I am delighted. At what hour, may I ask? Seven-thirty? Very happy, I'm sure. The pleasure is all mine. Then till seven-thirty. Good day. Delightful!"

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"Angela, I have heard that all the best little girls adore silk stockings; I will bet you a dozen pairs to a lock of your hair . . . that Mr. Nant proposes to Miss Sigsbee this afternoon and she accepts him." [*Page* 288, *col.* 1.]

"What twinkly little legs he has!" murmured Mr. Gumblay, lighting an excellent cigarette.

After a pleasant clandestine run with Angela in the grey Vauxhall, during which she consumed a pound of chocolates and enjoyed her first lesson in driving, Mr. Gumblay returned to the "Hand and Spear" and laved his countenance. Seven-thirty brought Mr. Nant, crisp and crackling as a five per cent. Treasury bond. They sat down to meat.

For a space Mr. Nant talked gaily about his collection of postage stamps, discoursing of surcharges, watermarks, war-issues, and the like. Presently the conversation took a graver turn. They edged a little closer to one another and spoke of money. Mr. Gumblay claimed ownership of most of the also-rans quoted in the current financial papers, he wondered if he might be obliged to sell his car. Mr. Nant sympathised, and beneath his sympathy lurked a fierce joy. Mr. Gumblay quaffed green liqueur sorrowfully.

"Of course, a judicious marriage might retrieve the position," he murmured half to himself. "By the way, Nant, Miss Sigsbee seems pretty comfortable. You ought to know everybody's affairs in the place. I

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should say she has a tidy little income, what? Not at all a bad-looking woman either; and, by Jove! she knows how to dress, eh?"

"Ha! ha! I see you like your little joke!" cackled Mr. Nant, but there was no mirth in his laughter.

"Mr. Gumblay, forgive me, but you are talking nonsense. What can a few paltry pounds mean to you, a young man of fashion? Why, all Miss Sigsbee's income would hardly pay your cigar bill. And, besides, there is her trustee to be considered. I believe he is clothed with very ample power."

Mr. Nant studied his host narrowly.

"Well," returned Mr. Gumblay, almost with ferocity, "something must be done, or I shall have no cigar bill at all. By the way, have you heard that the charming occupant of 'The Nest' is about to flutter in London? I understand so, at any rate. I shall be able to improve our acquaintance—a not uncongenial task."

He watched the subtle poison work in Mr. Nant's mind with concealed relish, scenting shy approaching orange blossom. On the whole, it had proved an amusing Wednesday evening.

On Thursday in Claybury Parva the banks close at one p.m. Mr. Gumblay, sliding in his grey car across the village green at 3.30 in the afternoon on his way to an assignation with Angela, strictly approved by her mother, beheld Mr. Nant hasten up the tiled pathway of "The Nest." He laughed quietly, and observed later, looking into the violet eyes of his exquisite companion:

"Angela, I have heard that all the best little girls adore silk stockings; I will bet you a dozen pairs to a lock of your hair—expensive pairs, costing at least two and eleven three—that Mr. Nant proposes to Miss Sigsbee this afternoon and she accepts him. Will you gamble, beautiful princess?"

Angela changed down to second on a tiresome hill with only a moderate screaming of the gears.

"Cyprian, you are a mildly clever young man, and I have a lot of [illegible] pair of silk stockings—the[illegible]

She extended delicately a delicate [illegible]

"I think I will gamble, Cyprian dear."

That evening, after his halcyon drive, Mr. Gumblay called at the Bank House. Mr. Nant received him much as Dives might have received Lazarus.

"Before we begin our pleasant chat," he said a little fulsomely, though he was ever fulsome, "I should like to tell you I am the happiest of men. This afternoon Miss Sigsbee accepted my proposal of marriage."

Mr. Gumblay nodded gently, his eyes fixed dreamily on the stamp cabinet.

"You are a lucky fellow, Nant. I congratulate you most heartily. You must be careful about that trustee, though—I believe they are the very devil. What I really came to tell you was that my affairs are not so bad as I imagined. My pass book informs me that I can afford to invest an odd twenty thousand; but no doubt you are far too happy to trouble about my few pennies. Some other time perhaps."

"I shall be honoured," acquiesced Mr. Nant with a ghastly smile. "Delighted. Not at all. A privilege. Certainly. Thank you. No trouble in the least."

IV.

Some days later, in the peace of his Half Moon Street smoking-room, Mr. Gumblay with his own hands packed up a parcel. It contained twelve pairs of silk stockings at fifteen shillings a pair.

As you must know by now, fairest Angela (he had written in a small note which he inclosed), you have won your bet, which I hasten to pay. The more than gold of your hair thus remains unravished, but I should esteem a photograph—even a little nasty one is better than nothing—if you can spare one.

Lastly, Mr. Gumblay pressed the bell.

"Lucas," he commanded, indicating a shell-case, "to the jeweller's, and register this as you go."

"This" was Angela's silken hosiery.

(Next month Mr. Gumblay meets a delightful girl who yearns to rub shoulders with those in high society, and who under his experienced guidance spends a not uneventful fortnight.)

PLEASE ORDER YOUR "ROYAL!"

If you will all do this we shall know exactly how many copies to print, and the result will be a great saving of paper. Moreover, there is the soldier—or is it a sailor?—to whom you pass on your copy, to consider. You can't disappoint him. The ROYAL will help to keep up his spirits, and "Tommy" fights his best when he is in good spirits. So please order your ROYAL and make sure of it.

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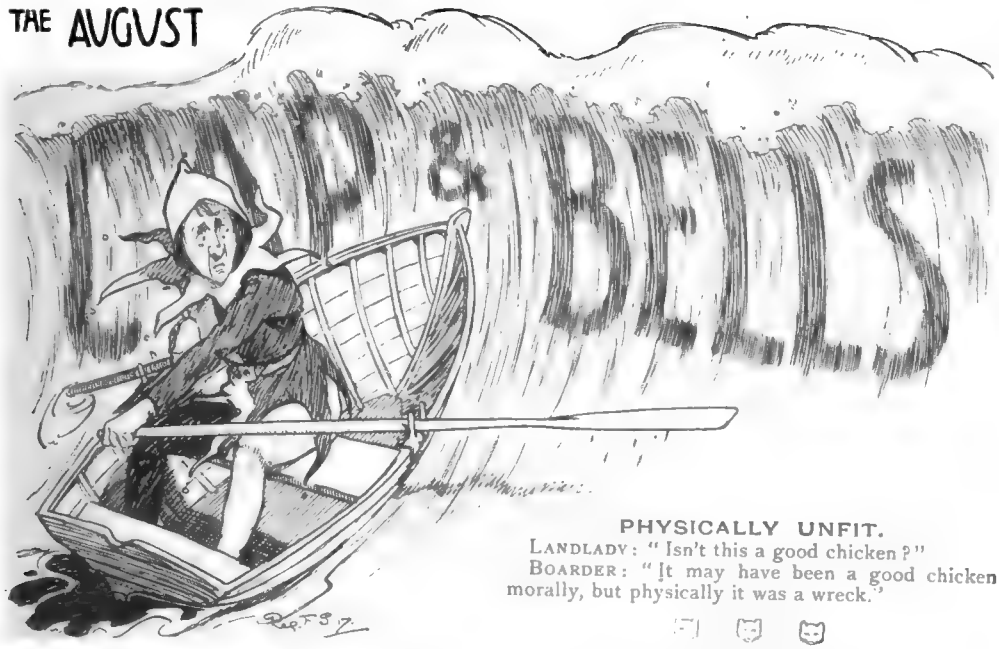
THE AUGUST



PHYSICALLY UNFIT.

LANDLADY: "Isn't this a good chicken?"

BOARDER: "It may have been a good chicken morally, but physically it was a wreck."

LOCATING THE TROUBLE.

When a butcher answered his telephone one day, the shrill voice of a little girl greeted his ears.

"Hello! Is that Mr. Wilson?"

"Yes," he answered kindly.

"Well, can you tell us where grandpa's liver is? We've got to put a hot flannel on it, and we can't find it."

AN I. O. U.

"Have you a kiss to spare to-day?"
Begged Reginald. But she shook her head—
"I've given too many kisses away;
But I'll *lend* you one, if you wish, instead."

And then she whispered, half in fun,
(As Reginald's brow grew stern and black;)
"For I know if he only *borrows* one,
A *man of honour* will—give it back!"

G. N.

GIVING HIM THE HUMP.

Captain Jones was a very round-shouldered and very eccentric officer.

On a particularly dark night in Egypt, whilst practising his company in out-post duty, he approached one of the sentries, who failed to halt him.

In a great rage the officer demanded of the now trembling sentry the reason why he had omitted to challenge him.

"If you please, sir," stuttered the confused soldier, "I thought you was a camel."

NOT YET AN ALLOTMENT!

Little four-year-old Mabel was shopping with he mother, when it began raining very hard.

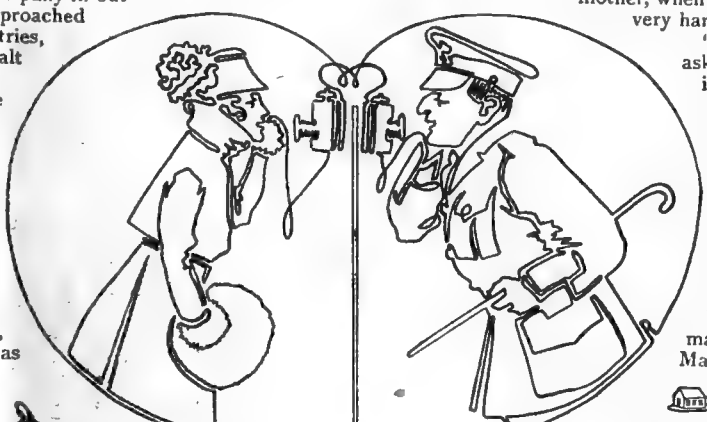
"Mamma," she asked, "why does it rain?"

"To make the grass and vegetables grow, and the strawberries that you love so well," was the reply.

"But why does it rain on Regent Street, mamma?" queried Mabel.

THE LOWEST OF THE LOW.

TEACHER (addressing her class): "Now, children, name some of the lower animals, starting with Willie Jones."



THE LINE OF COMMUNICATION.

This clever little sketch is drawn in one continuous line, starting with the officer's eye and finishing with that of the girl.

A CLOSE SECOND.

HE (very much in love): "There's nothing half so sweet in life as love's young dream."

SHE: "I don't know. Mixed chocolates are pretty good."

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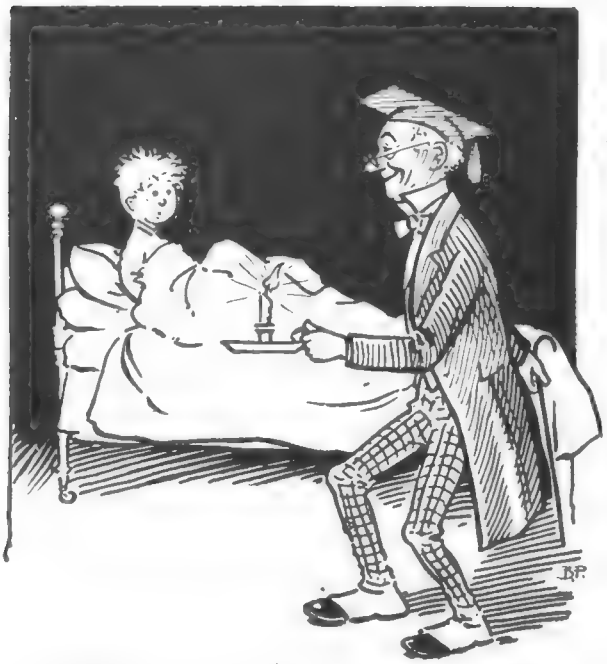

SCHOOLMASTER: "Now, O'Brien, what were you doing out of bed?"

O'BRIEN: "If you please, sir, I just jumped out to tuck myself in."

PARADISE WON.

Their parrot had died, and young Master Tommy, with his little sister Jennie, had just concluded the funeral service over the grave of their feathered pet.

"I s'pose Polly is in Heaven now," remarked Jennie tearfully.

"Yes," returned Tommy; "I s'pose she is."

"She's got wings, but she wouldn't be an angel up there, would she?" inquired the little maid, anxious about the bird's present status.

"Oh!" cried Tommy; "she wouldn't be an angel; only people is that."

"Then what do you s'pose she is now?" persisted his sister.

Tommy thought for a moment. Then the light of inspiration dawned on his beaming countenance.

"I s'pose Polly is a bird of paradise now," he announced joyfully.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST.

SHE: "This fur rug is very beautiful; to what beast does it belong?"

HE (candidly): "To me."

ON THE FENCE.

THE RECRUITING OFFICIAL: "One gran'father living? Is he on your father's or mother's side?"

THE RECRUIT: "Oh, 'e varies, sir; 'e sticks up for both on em—a sort o' nootral."

THE CHANCE OF A LIFETIME.

A street Arab about ten years old was heard calling loudly the other day in Drury Lane:

"Jimmy! Jimmy!"

"What's the matter?" queried Jimmy from a third-storey window.

"Get Sam and Bill, and yer sister Mary, and all the other kids you can and hurry up."

"What fur?"

"'Cause the ice-cream man out here has got drunk and fell down, and there's the best chance to get a good feed we'll ever have in the world!"

HER PROPERTY.

A woman mounted the step of a tram, carrying an umbrella like a reversed sabre. The conductor touched her lightly, saying:

"Excuse me, madam, but you are likely to put out the eye of the man behind you."

"He's my husband," she snapped, in a tone of full proprietorship.

THE REGIMENTAL PET.

Spud Murphy was being entertained right royally in the regimental canteen, and Ginger Jones was watching the revels jealously.

"Wot are they makin' sich a fuss o' that sandwich-chested son of a doormat for?" he asked of a comrade.

"'E's a 'ero, 'e is," said the man, "that's why. There's bin a cricket match this afternoon, and 'e's bin bowlin'. 'E's a great bowler, is Spud."

"Ho! 'E got 'em out quick; did the 'at trick, eh?"

"No, 'e didn't. 'E never hit the wicket not once."

"Thought you said 'e could bowl?"

"So 'e can. W'y, man alive, 'e knocked out four of the sargint-major's teeth first ball. The bounder won't be able to say: 'Shun! As you were! 'Shun!' till he gets a new lot!"

Why the Prehistoric Pigs were Late for Market.

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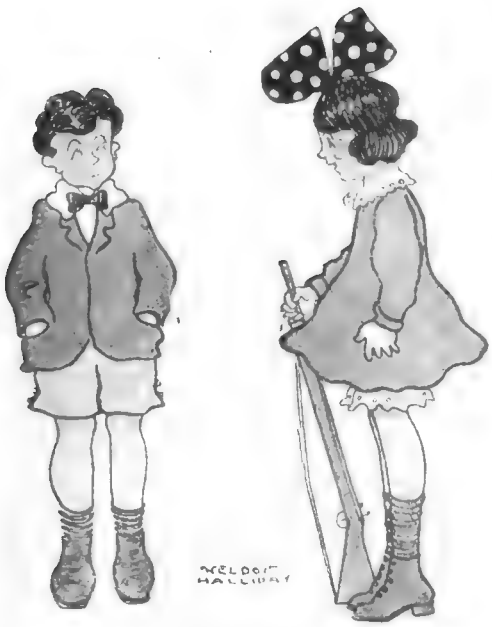

UP-TO-DATE.

EVE: "I'm tired of playing at sentries. Let's play at your going to the Front and saying good-bye."

LIVE AND LET LIVE!

Prior to the commencement of a boys' cricket match there were several candidates on the fielding side for the position of long field.

"Ginger 'Arris 'ad it last week and the week afore," complained two or three of the boys to their captain; "it's about time someone else 'ad a turn."

The discussion seemed likely to end in a free fight, when the local curate came on the scene, and endeavoured to pour oil on the troubled waters.

"You surprise me, boys," he said. "Harris has done especially well in that position, hasn't he?"

"'E 'as so," agreed the malcontents. "If 'e's 'ad to climb Bliggins' wall after the ball once, 'e's 'ad to a dozen times."

"Well?" queried the reverend gentleman.

"That's why we want a chance!" snapped a podgy youngster. "Old Bliggins' gooseberries are ripe, and 'is bulldog's dead!"

TROUBLE AT THE OUTSET.

An old woman from the moorland parts of an Aberdeenshire parish, when about to take her first holiday excursion, entered the compartment of a railway-carriage with much trepidation, and sat down rather gingerly in one of the corner seats.

Just as the train was getting into motion, the engine gave a shrill scream. Thereupon up jumped the old woman, and, with a startled ejaculation, exclaimed:

"There they are, noo, ower a pig at the very start!"

THE OBVIOUS THING.

SUBBUBS: "My neighbour has a big dog that we are all afraid of. What would you advise?"

LAWYER: "Get a bigger one. Six-and-eightpence, please."

ALGY.

Oh, Algy is fighting in Flanders,
He joined with the rest of the boys,
At first how he "groused" at the training!
But later discoursed on its joys;
And then, when he got his commission,
His spirits went up with a bound,
For his uniform looked "simply topping,"
And "suited him down to the ground."

The Strand seems quite lost without Algy,
His swagger and eye-glass and spats;
We miss his advice upon fashion,
His interest in *matinée* hats;
His witty remarks on the weather,
On golf, or the latest new song,
His tales about "backing the winner,"
And trips to "the gay Contenong."

But Algy's learnt something in Flanders,
And finds in the thick of it all
An eyeglass is quite unessential—
He's almost forgotten to drawl.
In fact, he's a *differe. t* Algy,
And really—between you and me—
I'd much rather marry the Algy that *is*
Than the Algy that *used to be*.

Helen Stewart.

DESCRIBED IN DETAIL.

"What sort of a chap is Johnson?"

"Well, if you ever see two men in a corner, and one looks bored to death, the other is Johnson."

THE 1917 CLASS: "What's that?"
THE MONS VETERAN (sarcastically): "A sniper!"

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HER OPINIONS DIFFERED.

DOMESTIC: "Please, ma'am, I'll leave at the end of the month."

MISTRESS: "What is your reason, Mary?"

DOMESTIC: "Well, ma'am, the fact is I don't hold with the master's ideas on the war."

COMFORTING.

PASSENGER (on Highland coach): "Of course, you're well acquainted with the country round about here. Do you know Glen Accron?"

DRIVER: "Ay, weel."

PASSENGER (who has just bought the estate): "What sort of a place is it?"

DRIVER: "Well, if ye saw the de'il tethered on't, ye'd just say: 'Puir brute!'"

NOT A CONTINUOUS PERFORMANCE.

"Elsie," said her mother warningly, "if you're so naughty you won't go to Heaven."

Elsie thought it over.

"Well, mother," she said at length, "I went to the Zoo on Sunday, and the pictures yesterday. I can't expect to go everywhere."

STALE NEWS.

RAILWAY ATTENDANT (to man smoking): "You can't smoke."

THE SMOKER: "So my friends say."

RAILWAY ATTENDANT: "But you musn't smoke."

THE SMOKER: "So my doctor says."

RAILWAY ATTENDANT: "Well, you shan't smoke."

THE SMOKER: "So my wife says."

GARDENING IN HIGH PLACES.

ENTHUSIASTIC ROOF-GARDENER: "Really surprising how these onions are coming along on this southern slope!"

A RISE IN FOOD.

OFFICER: "Is that soup ready, Jones?"

OFFICER'S SERVANT: "No, sir, the stove went out, sir."

OFFICER: "Went out! Then why didn't you light it again?"

OFFICER'S SERVANT: "'Cos it went out by the roof, sir."

LEADING HER A DANCE.

THE LADY OF THE HOUSE (to the beggar): "Go away. I will give you nothing."

At this moment a barrel-organ at the corner strikes up.

THE BEGGAR: "May I at least ask for the pleasure of this waltz, madam?"

TAKING PRECEDENCE.

The old type of travelling manager was moving his company very, very much on the cheap, and a kindly stationmaster had smuggled them into goods trucks, and had sent them off at goods rates. As the train stopped during the night at a wayside station, the stationmaster asked the guard what he had in the train.

"Artificial manure and actors!" was the reply.

Immediately a head appeared from the cattle-truck, and a voice thundered: "Sir, you might have said 'actors' first!"

MISUNDERSTOOD.

MISTRESS: "Are you married?"

MAID: "No'm. I bumped into a door."

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THE FIRST ENGAGEMENT OF THE C 3 BRIGADE.

(By One of Them.)

CROCKS III
Might as well have put me in the Flying corps
A Harrowing tale
The only job we did efficiently
And milk 6d a quart too
Auntie Boyles

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"GLAD·RAGS"

By Jessie Pope.

"For gowns, and gloves, and caps, and tippets,
Are beauty's sauces, spice, and sippets."

When Madge Macpherson started her "Confidential Glad Rags Bureau" she proved that, although not actually a money grubber, she had a business head and an eye to the main chance. The scheme was sound and successful and made her popular among those of her girl friends who were too impecunious or too patriotic to spend their substance on "glad rags" in war-time.

There were, however, occasions of extreme festivity, such as the furlough and short leave of other patriots, which inspired them with a sudden loathing of sober and useful garments; and it was to relieve this natural distress that Madge sank some of her savings in a well-chosen and fascinating assortment of "glad rags," and loaned them to friends at so much a time. Like all institutions which supply a need of the moment, the "Glad Rags Bureau" caught on instantaneously, and business was brisk. Madge never made a bad debt, and by careful attention to financial details she soon began to see her money back and a bit on the credit side.

One bright morning in July, when Madge was busily cleaning a smartly-cut white coat frock with clothball, the door opened, and Isobel Norman, the loveliest but laziest of her circle, entered. Isobel's hair was as black as midnight, her eyes like stars, and her skin as clear and creamy as a tea-rose. She wore a last year's frock and a worried expression, and after the preliminary exchange of a salute on both cheeks, remarked in her languid way:

"I am going to a private view at the Dorchester Galleries to-morrow and I haven't a rag."

"Well, you can see what I've got," replied Madge, looking at her thoughtfully. "Take your choice—penny plain, twopence coloured."

"I think it must be twopence coloured," said Isobel with her calm, meditative smile, "because Glen Murray is back and I'm going to meet him there."

"Oh, that's your New Zealand 'Tommy,' isn't it?" said Madge.

"New Zealanders are not 'Tommies,'" corrected Isobel seriously. "Besides, he's a second-lieutenant now."

"And as he's only got short leave there's no time to be lost," laughed Madge.

"Don't be frivolous," replied her client. "Glen is no more to me than I am to him, but I don't want to look as if I came out of a rag-bag."

"You shan't do that, dear," said Madge. "I've got the very thing for you to wear over your smoke-grey ninon. Look here, if this doesn't do the trick and turn your New Zealander's head—well, he must have been born with a stiff neck." As she spoke, Madge took out a cardboard box, and from its tissue paper wrappings shook out a sleeveless coatee in soft silk, light and clinging as thistledown, where blue and amethyst and silver were subtly mingled with all the tender eloquence of Oriental colouring.

"O—oh," sighed Isobel, her languid dark eyes growing wide and childlike. "How beautiful!"

"Yes, it's all right, isn't it?" agreed Madge; "and look, dear, here's the dinkiest little silk pocket in the flap, just large enough to hold an elegant item of nose-wear. Well, it's yours for to-morrow—if you can run to it."

"How much?"

"Five shillings if you don't spill your food down it. Heaven knows what if you do. Slip it on."

That did it! If Isobel looked an unusually pretty girl before, she appeared a veritable young goddess come to earth in the blue coatee. Apart from business considerations, Madge was frankly enraptured, and though Isobel was languid and deliberate as usual, there was an extra sparkle in her starry eyes as she paid the money, arranged for delivery, and invited her friend to tea and to hear all about it, before they parted.

"That coat is going to be a winner," ejaculated Madge, once more alone. "If I

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let it out at 5s. a time the first month, 3s. 6d. the second—no, 4s. the second—and——" But in the middle of her computation the door opened hurriedly, and Peggy Cheriton, a bonny-faced, flaxen-haired girl in V.A.D. kit, burst in. Her bright blue eyes fell on the coatee and widened like saucers.

"My aunt!" she ejaculated. "What a peach! Oh, Madge, my ownest one, let me get inside it a moment," and she got.

It was part of the eastern magic of the garment that the shape and colour adapted itself automatically to the shape, colouring, and complexion of the wearer. If Isobel looked a goddess, then Peggy was immediately transformed into a fairy princess ready for the revels. She pranced and posed before the long pier-glass, then suddenly turned on Madge with a desperate seriousness in her sunny face.

"I must have this for Thursday," she said.

"Afraid you can't," replied her friend. "It's booked."

"What, for Thursday?"

"No, for Wednesday, but I shan't have it back till Thursday. I'm going to have tea with my client that day, and was going to collect it myself. But what's your trouble? Are you meeting your fate on Thursday, then?"

Peggy nodded.

"What, again?" laughed Madge.

"No, never again," said Peggy simply. "This is the last for ever and always."

"And is he a New Zealander too?" asked Madge.

Peggy's blue eyes widened. "Yes, how did you know?"

"Oh, I guessed. It's their millinery that attracts all you girls, I suppose."

"I suppose it is, in a way," admitted Peggy, "but he looks even nicer without his hat. His name is Martin Blake; ripping name, isn't it? He was wounded twice in Gallipoli and finally knocked out in France. His left arm is practically useless, and he's no good for any more fighting, thank goodness, so he's running a paper for the N.Z. boys over here. I sent him some verses for it. He was awfully bucked; so was I, because it's the only thing I've ever had in print; but, of course, I didn't tell him *that*. Anyhow, he's giving a tea to contributors on Thursday and has asked me to come to it, but if I can't have the coat I'd sooner stop at home."

Madge pondered.

"Well," she said, "I'll ring up my other client and ask her to have it ready for you to collect on Wednesday evening. She won't want it herself later than six, because she goes to her canteen or something."

"Oh, I'll do that, or anything else to make sure of it," said Peggy joyfully. "What's the damage, Madge?"

Madge replied with her usual formula.

"Oh, I won't spill my food down it," laughed Peggy, "and I hope to goodness the other girl doesn't. Here's the money, Madge; it's cheap at the price. You'd better take it now while I've got it."

Over the telephone Isobel expressed her willingness to relinquish all claim to the coat after 6.30 and to leave it ready to be collected in the evening. The evening didn't count to Isobel; it was the afternoon she was living for; for, in spite of her calm exterior, Glen Murray occupied a far bigger place in her horizon than she would have cared to confess. The thought of meeting him again lent an added glow to her glorious dark grey eyes and a quick tinge of colour to her creamy cheeks, while, if she had only known it, the thought of being by her side again sent Glen pacing the streets at a loss to know how to get through the hours till the moment arrived that he had been longing for all those months in the trenches.

And yet, when it did, he was tongue-tied. Big, brave, red-headed New Zealander as he was, the sight of Isobel in her "glad rags" coming towards him across the polished floor of the picture gallery absolutely took his breath away and left him weakly wondering at his temerity in even thinking it possible that this glorious young goddess should ever become his own property. Glen Murray was a bit of an artist himself, and his humorous black-and-white sketches of Gallipoli and French impressions were very popular contributions to the N.Z. rag before mentioned. But the pictures on the walls failed to interest him; he was conscious only of Isobel's presence, but now she was close beside him all those imaginary conversations which he had rehearsed in the solitude of his dug-out went completely out of his head.

Some girls are difficult to propose to, some are easy, and Isobel was one of the difficult ones. She half divined his condition and wanted to help him, but as soon as he got to the brink of the plunge she grew scared and pulled him back to safer ground with some calm and commonplace remark. Glen's methods with those Turks and Germans who had had the misfortune to come in close contact with him had been rough and ready, to say the least of it, and yet, now when he sat by the girl of his heart in a retired corner, gloomily watching the people, his feet were getting colder every moment.

"That's a pretty woman," commented Isobel quietly, "and beautifully dressed." Her words gave him a cue, and he took it desperately.

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"Yes," he said, "but not a patch on you. I never saw anyone who was."

She flushed a little and her heart gave a sudden scared thump, but she spoke with her usual languid deliberation.

"Oh," she said, "that's the coat. It is rather pretty, isn't it? And see," she added, turning the long silk flap, "what a dinky little pocket!"

Glen laughed at its ridiculous dimensions, and, growing a little bolder, fingered the soft silk.

"It's a grand bit of colour," he said. "Reminds me of our sky at home. We like colour, you know—learnt it from the Maoris, I expect. Look at this! My grandfather got it from a Maori chief, though where *he* got it from Lord knows; it's not native work," and he brought out of his pocket a slender ring with a clear gem like a bit of green foam caught in a silver setting.

"How exquisite!" murmured Isobel, her eyes feasting on its beauty. "But fancy keeping it in your pocket like that. You'll lose it."

"No, I won't," he blurted out. "It's supposed to bring luck, and I'm keeping it for a particular purpose. I shall never have the nerve to ask the girl I love to marry me, so I'm going to give her this ring instead."

"Well, I hope she'll appreciate it," said Isobel steadily. "She may prefer something more conventional."

"What, than me or the ring?" he asked seriously.

"Oh—both," she said, laughing.

He grew gloomy once more.

"It's more than likely. Anyhow, if she won't have the ring I shall know it means she hasn't any time for me either."

"And *we* shan't have any time for the pictures if we don't have a look round," said Isobel, rising. "And I know there are several we ought to see."

The New Zealander's spirits dropped to zero, and even the *tête-à-tête* tea at a little table later failed to revive them. The afternoon was ending in failure. He felt his star was more distant and unapproachable than ever, while Isobel herself grew a little listless and sore at heart. She rose to go—there was nothing to stop for—and as she did so the flap of the coat swept across the table with the pocket uppermost. An inspiration suddenly flashed through Glen Murray's brain, and, as Isobel leant forward to collect her catalogue and sunshade, he slipped the ring in the little pocket and stood up beside her with a sigh of relief. He'd done it, anyhow! She'd got the ring, she knew what it tokened; it was up to her either to keep it or send it back. He had taken the plunge, and the sudden revival of his spirits as he said good-bye was naturally interpreted by Isobel into relief at getting rid of her after a very dull afternoon.

There was nothing bright and breezy about Glen, however, when he called on his friend Martin Blake at the *N.Z. Gazette* office the following day. The amateur editor, a lean, hard-faced, resolute-looking Anzac, looked up from his work on proof-sheets.

"Well—what luck? Did you ask her?"

Glen shook his head.

"My feet were too cold," he said, "but I did the next best thing," and he related the story of the ring in the pocket of the blue coat.

"And she returned it with thanks," said Martin. "Never mind, old man, better luck next time."

"No, she didn't; that's the trouble. Thought it was bound to come back by first post. Not a word! I couldn't wait any longer, called round to see her, and I could tell from her manner in a moment that she hadn't spotted the ring at all. Felt it was about time to get a move on, so told her I was doing a sketch with a bit of colour in it the same blue as that coat of hers, and I asked her to let me have another look at it.

"She seemed a bit taken aback and upset, and said she couldn't show me the coat because somebody had been to her flat while she was out the night before and pinched it. She didn't say 'pinched'—she never talks slang—but she seemed awfully cut up over the loss of it. She wouldn't let me give information at Scotland Yard—didn't want the publicity of it. Anyhow, I hadn't the nerve to tell her what I'd put in the pocket. She's lost her coat, I've lost the ring, and I think the next time I get a chance of leave I'll stop in the trenches."

"Rotten luck," sympathised his friend. "Had they taken anything else?"

"No, she said she hadn't missed anything yet. Look, here's the sketch—I told her the truth when I said I was doing one—but I didn't tell her it was of her. I worked at it all night."

Martin glanced at an impressionist sketch of a beautiful girl in a wonderful blue coat, and made suitable ejaculations of appreciation. "Look here, old man," he said, "don't worry. I can see I'll have to butt in and fix up your love affairs for you. But put in a bit of work for me this afternoon. I want your stuff for press to-morrow. Go in the next room and finish it, and don't disturb me till half-past four because I'm going to be busy."

Glen grinned.

"Hullo!" he said. "Who is she?"

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She rose to go, . . . and as she did so the flap of the coat swept across the table with the pocket uppermost. An inspiration suddenly flashed through Glen Murray's brain, and, as Isobel leant forward to collect her catalogue and sunshade, he slipped the ring in the little pocket.

"Well—there's going to be an Editorial tea-party, but by a stroke of good luck only one of them can come. You can meet her at tea, but not before."

"Right-o!" replied his friend. "But tell me all about her."

"I don't know much myself," replied Martin, "except that she's got me, and by 4.30 you'll know if I've got her. I'm going to ask her if she'll fancy Blake for a surname and New Zealand for a home, while the kettle's boiling—and if all goes well, you shall be the first to congratulate us."

"Oh, all will go well enough with *you*; you're such a lucky beggar and you've got such a gift of the gab," said Glen rather sourly, as he retired into the inner room, where, as a matter of fact, he spent most of his time putting finishing touches to the sketch of Isobel.

The attention of his Editorial chief kept wandering, also, from a sheaf of proofs, till a light step and a tap at the door made him push them away and call "Come in" in his best and busiest Editorial voice.

In walked Peggy, a delectable vision in blue and white, blue-eyed, flaxen-haired, and altogether adorable.

"What a nice bright office," she said with a blush and a smile, while her small, white-gloved hand still tingled from the Anzac's grip.

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"It wasn't a moment ago," replied Martin. "You brought the sunshine in with you."

She laughed joyously.

"But where are the others?" she inquired. "I thought it was going to be a party."

"It was," said Martin, "but none of them could come."

"What a pity," said Peggy, her eyes dancing. "I suppose I ought to go."

"I suppose you ought after you've had tea," he retorted. "Somebody's got to help me eat the cakes."

"Cakes!" cried Peggy. "Who said cakes in war-time? O-o-h! How gorgeous!" she added, peeping at the dish on the other table. "When it comes to my turn I'll have that one with the cherries in it. May I?"

"Yes—if old Murray doesn't bag it first."

"Who's old Murray?"

"He's one of my military artists," said the Editor, swanking a trifle, "and he's working in the next room until I call him for tea, which I guess I shan't be in a hurry to do," he added, regarding her gravely.

Peggy went pink under his gaze.

"You've only seen me in my V.A.D. kit before," she told him. "Do you like me in 'civvies'?"

"You bet your sweet life I do," he replied, and Peggy asked for no more eloquent praise. They put the kettle on to boil, and then they went and sat by the window. Peggy was an easy girl to propose to, and yet Martin dallied with the sweetness of the moment—they were close together, perfectly happy in their laughter and repartee; they seemed to belong to each other without the words being uttered. It was only when the kettle showed symptoms of boiling over that he decided to put the question.

"But, see here, Peggy," he said with a sudden gentleness, "there's something terribly important I want to ask you before the other chap comes in—where are you going to?" he added, for she had half-risen.

"To take the kettle off," she said demurely; "it will make such a mess." But Martin put out a hand to detain her.

"Oh—hang the kettle!" he exclaimed, then stopped abruptly, for his hand had closed, not only on her silk coat, but on something in the pocket, a small hard-shaped object which was unmistakably a ring.

He looked quickly at Peggy and then at the coat, and realised for the first time that it was the very *facsimile* of the garment worn by the girl in Glen's sketch. The proposal died on his lips, his grasp relaxed. "Very well," he said, "go and take the kettle off." And walking away to the table, he filled his pipe and began to smoke in silence.

"What's the matter? Aren't you well?" asked Peggy, looking over her shoulder at him, struck by this sudden change of manner and the curious expression on his hard, brown face.

"I don't feel too good," he said.

"Is your arm hurting you again?"

It wasn't his arm, but his heart, but he said: "Yes, a bit—and there's something I want to speak to my chum about. I'll be back in a minute."

"Hullo!" said Glen, pushing the sketch aside guiltily. "Time up? Why, what's wrong; has she given you the bird?"

Martin shook his head and smoked silently for a few seconds, then he said:

"No—but—I believe she's wearing your girl's coat."

"The dickens!" said Glen. "Are you sure?"

Martin nodded and his lips quivered. "I guess I am," he replied. "I've just felt the ring in the pocket."

"Good!" ejaculated Glen. "Well—I'd better go and claim it."

"No—come in and ask a few questions; she may be able to give a satisfactory explanation. If not, you'd better get your girl to come and identify it, but don't let her know what you're driving at. She's—I—well—this beats all!" ejaculated Martin with a groan.

The urgency of the business cured Glen of his usual shyness. He shook hands with Peggy, and, after a few preliminary remarks, plunged into the matter at once.

"That's 'some' coat you're wearing," he remarked. "If I may say so it's a grand bit of colour."

Peggy smiled and beamed.

"Glad you like the old rag," she said in her light-hearted, flippant way. "I do myself. Makes you think of the Arabian Nights. I don't expect there's another one like it outside Persia."

"Now, that's a queer thing, too," said Glen, "for I saw a girl wearing the very spit and image of it yesterday."

Peggy's smile froze, and a sudden, uneasy flush of embarrassment suffused her face. Both men were looking at her steadily. It almost seemed as if they divined the secret of the "Glad Rags Bureau," a secret she was prepared to defend at any cost.

"That's very possible," she said lightly. "I daresay, as a matter of fact, there are plenty of them about, but it's bad luck to come across a couple in two days."

"My friend's name," said Glen, "is Isobel Norman. She lives at 3 Whippingham Court Mansions. Do you know her?"

Peggy blushed again, but kept her end up.

"No," she said steadily, though she evaded

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their eyes; "I don't know her from Adam." And then turning suddenly to her host she said: "Shall I make tea? I'm dying for a cup."

"Yes, if you like," he replied in a colourless voice.

Glen exchanged a glance with his friend. "I'd better get on the telephone, hadn't I?" he asked.

Martin nodded, and turning his back on the tea-maker, stood desperately and dejectedly staring out of the window.

Isobel and Madge were just starting their tea at 3 Whippingham Court Mansions when the telephone bell rang. "It's Glen Murray," said Isobel, coming back from answering it. "I don't know what's the matter, but he wants me to taxi round to the *N.Z. Gazette* Office. He says it's most urgent. He seems rather excited, but he wouldn't say what was the matter. Will you come with me?"

Madge looked at the dainty tea-table with a sigh. "What, *now?*" she protested. "Can't we go after tea?"

"No, I promised I'd go at once."

"What a nuisance those Colonial lovers are," grumbled Madge. "However, I suppose I'd better come and see what's wrong," and in less than twenty minutes a providentially passing taxi landed them at the office door.

But it had been a very long twenty minutes for Peggy. The tea was insipid, the cakes had lost their usual magic, and though Glen kept up a feverishly futile conversation, the man she loved had suddenly become impervious to her charm, and was absent-minded almost to rudeness. In fact, she had risen to go in spite of their sudden united attempt to persuade her to stay another five minutes, when the door opened, and there stood Madge and Isobel, glancing in perplexity at the two tall Anzacs, and Peggy, blue-coated, petulant and pretty, standing between them.

Glen strode forward. "I'm glad you've come," he said. "*There it is!*"

"What?" inquired Isobel, more bewildered than ever.

"Your blue coat that was taken from your flat last night."

Isobel frowned slightly, and a tinge of colour rose to her creamy cheeks. "It's not mine," she confessed in a low voice.

"Not yours?" repeated Glen. "Then whose is it?"

She passionately tore off the coat and flung it to the ground. "You believed I was a thief!" she cried. . . . "I'll never forgive you as long as I live."
[Page 300, col. 1.]

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"Well, if everybody has their own," remarked Madge, "it's mine. At least—no——" she glanced at her wrist watch, "as a matter of fact, it's Peggy's till 6.30."

"You mean—you kind of share it between you," stammered Glen. "I—I—didn't guess."

"Ah, my young friend," said Madge sagely, "you don't guess half the shifts we women are put to in war-time." As she spoke a sudden movement from Peggy made them turn and look at her, as she passionately tore off the coat and flung it to the ground.

"You believed I was a thief!" she cried, facing Martin Blake. "I'll never forgive you as long as I live—anybody can have the old coat for me. I hate it!" And with her blue eyes brimming with hot tears she charged blindly through the first door she came to, which, however, only led into the inner office.

Discovering her mistake she turned back, to find Martin Blake had followed, and was standing between her and the closed door, pity and penitence in every line of his eloquent face. It was no use trying to push him aside. He caught the little, sobbing, coatless figure in his arms, and in two seconds swept away her resentment with the overwhelming mastery of an Anzac's love and remorse.

Meanwhile Madge had collected the "glad rag" from the dusty floor, and was shaking and smoothing it, when she exclaimed: "Hullo, here's something in the pocket," and held out the greenstone ring.

Isobel took it from her, and then her eyes met Glen's.

"I think that's mine," she said. "Isn't it, Glen?"

"I guess so," he replied simply. "Will you come and—and—look at the sketch I have here?" And they passed into his room together.

Madge glanced at two closed doors, and put the kettle on again with a smile of amusement.

"I'd better make some fresh tea," she said. "They'll be glad of a cup after all this—and it strikes me if it's going to be a double wedding I shall have to wear the 'glad rag' at the ceremony myself, for luck."

And she did.

L'ENTENTE ÉTABLIE.

"Oh, Antoinette, dear Antoinette, *j'ai des nouvelles pour toi,*
La guerre will soon be *finie* and I'm going back *chez moi,*
And Antoinette, sweet Antoinette, *je serai tout heureux*
Back home in dear old England—*imagine—quel bonheur!*"

"Oh, Tommee, dear, you mak' me sad, you mak' me *très, très triste,*
Que ferai-je wizout you, I do not know ze least;
Et qui t'apprendra 'flirting' *et qui t'apprendra* 'French,'
Et qui te dira '*au revoir*' when you go in ze trench?"

"Oh, Antoinette, *chère* Antoinette, there'll be no trench back there,
Save those we dig in gardens where we put *les pommes de terre,*
But if you think I can't get on without some help from you,
We might as well—I don't see why—say, 'Toinette, *voulez-vous?*"

"Oh, Tommee, dear, you funny boy, you—what you call—propose,
Et moi, to finis' bargain, *n'est-ce pas* you say 'I close';
But, Tommee, if I mar'wy you, you mus' remember zis—
You won' go flirting *nevaire* wis zos *charmantes* English mees."

R. G. T.

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For "Soldiers and Sailors Too"

All the contributions on this page were sent in by officers and men serving in H.M. Forces. A pack of ROYAL playing-cards or a silver pencil-case is given for every accepted storyette, joke, bit of verse, or drawing sent in by a sailor or soldier. Please say which gift you prefer, and address envelopes to The O.C., ROYAL MAGAZINE, 18 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

WASHED ASHORE.

FIRST LIEUTENANT (to Snotty who has entered the ward-room wearing a dirty collar):

"I say, young man, that's rather a dirty collar you have on there, isn't it?"

SNOTTY: "Dirty, sir? That collar was washed ashore."

FIRST LIEUTENANT: "Yes, I can quite believe it, but from which wreck?"

LISTEN!

The Sergeant-Major was recently addressing a squad of new arrivals, and noticed one who had his eyes on the ground and his head held downward in a listening attitude.

"What were you in civil life?" he rapped out.

"A gardener, sir," replied the recruit.

"Oh! I see," said the Sergeant-Major; "you're listening for worms, eh?"

SLEEPERS IN ABUNDANCE.

At a hospital camp in France there were fifty men down each side of a long tent on beds which were about four inches from the ground. Every one of them was fast asleep, when in came the orderly, who was an Irishman, and shouted for them to get up. No one stirred.

"Well," he said, "I think I'll lay a set of railway lines down here. I've got plenty of sleepers."

A LENGTHY AFFAIR.

A Chaplain to the Forces was in a great hurry to get to the camp for a service, and while he was shaving, he unfortunately gave his nose a nasty gash. To stop the flow of blood he rushed to his bag for a piece of sticking-plaster, then proceeded to finish operations.

He had not been long at the camp when a great deal of laughter was observed. Upon his asking the reason a "Tommy" acknowledged it was his nose they were laughing at.

"You see, sir, it is warranted two hundred yards long," explained the private. The Chaplain had picked up a cotton reel label in mistake for sticking-plaster.

TAKING THE RISK.

A company were detailed to make a raid on the enemy trenches. One man, who was rather slow-witted, was left behind in the headquarters dug-out to look after the packs. When the company returned, one of the boys sought for some bread and cheese he had laid by in a sandbag, but could find no trace of it. So he turned to the dull-witted one.

"Have you had my grub?" he demanded.

"Yes," was the reply.

"Well, why the deuce did you take it?"

"Well, how did I know you were coming back?" retorted the delinquent with surprising smartness.

NO WORDS WASTED.

An officer who was censoring letters, most of which erred on the side of verbosity, was pleasantly relieved when he came to the following brief epistle:

"Dear mother" (it ran), "I'm alright, you're alright, that's alright. Love from Fred."

A BASE INSINUATION.

SERGEANT (to squad of recruits on parade for the first time): "Private Jones, why are you holding your rifle in the wrong hand?"

JONES: "I've got a splinter in the other one, Sergeant."

SERGEANT: "Been scratching your head, I suppose!"

NOT TO BE CAUGHT.

A man who was being medically examined pleaded that he had bad eyesight. The M.O. tested him first of all with the small letters on the sight-testing card, but the man failed to see them, so the officer passed on to the large ones. Still the man swore he couldn't see anything.

In desperation the officer dived into an adjoining room, and returned with the dustbin lid, which he held in front of the man's face.

"Can you see that?" yelled the M.O.

"Yes," replied the man.

"What is it?" asked the M.O.

"Two bob or half-a-crown," was the reply.

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PICTURE PARAGRAPHS

The Editor will be Pleased to Purchase Photographs of an Interesting and Out-of-the-Way Nature. All Photographs should be Accompanied by a Short Description.

Photo H. J. Shepstone.

This giant wheel was built for use in an American steel-mill. It is virtually three wheels in one, there being three distinct sets of cogs, but operated from a single pinion.

A GIANT WHEEL.

Our new ally seems to make a speciality of "skyscrapers" of all sorts, and what is described as the largest gear wheel ever forged might almost be included in this category.

This colossal wheel was recently built for use in one of Uncle Sam's great steel-mills. It is virtually three wheels in one, there being three distinct sets of cogs, but all operated from a single pinion. There are 154 teeth in the gear, specially fashioned out of the hardest steel. When fixed, the wheel will revolve at a speed of 2,000 feet per minute.

Some idea of the height of the wheel may be gauged by comparing it with the workman standing beside it. It is 28 feet in height, the distance across the three sets of teeth being about 6 feet.

This mastodon of modern machinery is a daring and clever piece of engineering work.

A PAGODA THAT ROCKS IN THE WIND.

Amongst other things for which Burma is famous are its pagodas; there is no country so rich in these picturesque religious edifices. They are encountered everywhere—in town, village, country, on the lonely banks of streams, and on the hill-tops.

The most remarkable of all these buildings is that known as the *sampan*, or boat pagoda, so called because the rock on which it stands somewhat resembles a *sampan*, or native boat. As a matter of fact, the temple rests on a huge rocking stone, and boulder and edifice move slightly in the wind. The stone itself is perched on the edge of an abrupt cliff, over which one would think a severe gale would precipitate it.

The structure is said to have been erected many years ago by a pious Burmese who made a fortune out of timber. It is of solid brick-work, stands about 12 feet high, and boasts the usual "Ti," or "umbrella" spire, hung with innumerable little bells which ring in the breeze.

In addition to its other curious qualities the pagoda has the attraction of being situated in the lofty Kelasa Hills, and a magnificent view of the surrounding country can be obtained from the platform of the shrine.

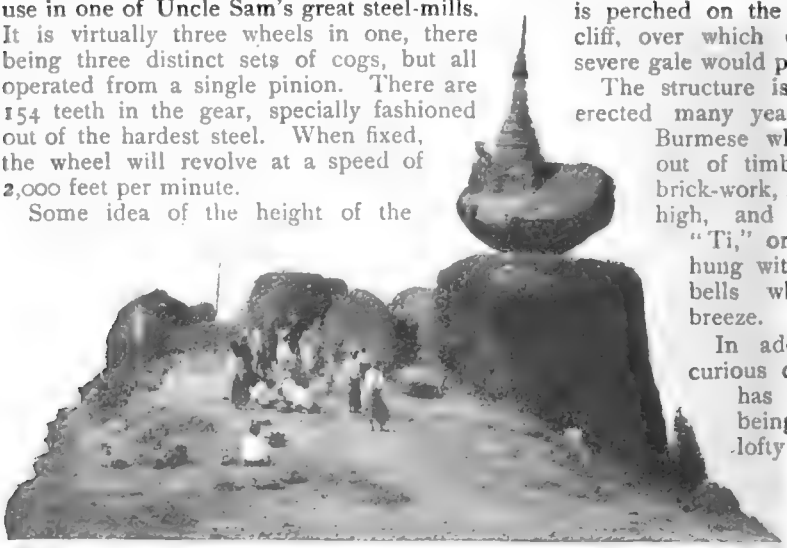

Photo H. J. Shepstone.

The "*sampan*," or boat pagoda, in Burma, is so called because the rock on which it stands somewhat resembles a *sampan*, or native boat. This rock is perched on the edge of an abrupt cliff, and both boulder and edifice rock slightly in the wind.

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Photo *Walter J. Lino.*

A one-horse car run until recently near Denver, Colorado. On the return journey the car is able to coast down a steep slope, and the horse occupies the rear platform, taking a well-earned rest and also serving as ballast.

A HORSE AS TRAMCAR PASSENGER.

UNTIL recently there could be seen near Denver, Colorado, the antiquated Englewood to Cherrelyn horse-car. The route to Cherrelyn rises steeply, and up this rise the horse slowly drew the car. At the other end he was unhitched and put in possession of the rear platform. The driver, mounted on the front platform, released the brakes and coasted down—the passengers having the pleasure of travelling down the slope to Englewood with a horse as companion.

"'WARE SNAKE!"

A LARGE and ferocious-looking serpent in the act of springing on its prey is the sight which greets the eyes of anyone who happens to pass by a certain cottage in Buckinghamshire. For upwards of forty years this creature has either terrified or amused uninitiated visitors to the neighbourhood, but as it is merely the gnarled limb of an oak-tree, which bears a very startling resemblance to a snake, no casualties have ever been reported.

The father of the present tenant bought the "serpent" from a neighbour for the modest sum of fourpence!

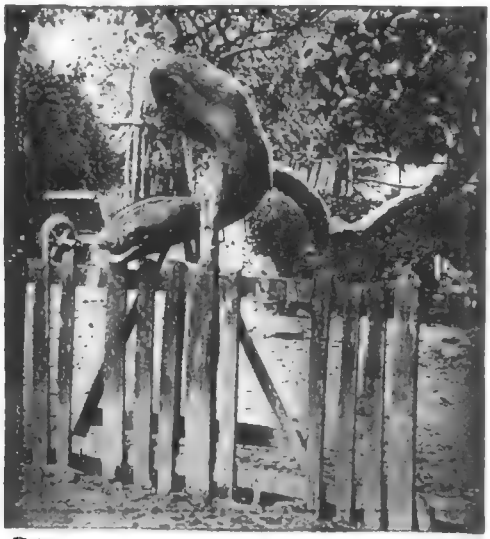

Photo *A. W. Cutler.*

The gnarled limb of an oak tree which strongly resembles a snake in the act of springing on its prey. This natural curiosity is to be seen in a village in Buckinghamshire.

AS USED BY THE ANCIENT BRITONS.

THE ancient coracle, practically identical in pattern with those used over 2,000 years ago by the ancient Britons, may still be seen in some parts of the British Isles.

They are used by the fishermen of Bangor-on-Dee, in Wales, and are made of sticks of ash covered with stout canvas saturated with tar. A strap on the seat is looped over the shoulders when carrying the coracle to and from the river. Their average weight is only 30 lbs., and they last for about two years.

Photo *A. W. Cutler.*

The coracles used by the fishermen of Bangor-on-Dee, in Wales, are practically identical in pattern with those used by the ancient Britons. They are carried by a strap fastened to the seat and looped over the shoulders.

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ON·THE·SPUR·OF·THE·MOMENT

By Jennie Harris Oliver.

"A guardian angel o'er his life presiding,
Doubling his pleasures, and his cares dividing."

I.

Lant Sturgis ascended Bald Knob through a sea of crimson sumac. As he circled from rock to rock his white satin tie flapped in the wind; a certain spruceness became him like a smile. It was his wedding day!

Up there, on a ledge of the mountain, was Glory Kirkland, the girl whose winning had been a lifelong, miserable delight. The "boys" from Fur Cove had assembled for the feast; Collingwood, the city man, was there!

Lant had been afraid of Collingwood—of his society manners, his ease with women, the time spent in teaching Glory to run his car while her future home was being refitted. It is hard for a man to drive nails and wield a paint-brush when his betrothed is out with another man—and the daughter of rough Sam Kirkland was an apt scholar.

As he rounded a sharp elbow of the rocks and came close to a creeper-shaded house, his eager gaze sought the window that was Glory's own. The thought gripped him that she would be waiting for him there, but only the blank casement stared back at him.

When he had tied his horse, he hastened forward, chilled by a silence that clung like clogging dust to the purple-rimmed spaces, and stooping under loops of honeysuckle encircling the verandah, he faced the open door and a crowd that made room for him awkwardly. As he paused, looking expectantly about, Mrs. Kirkland came into the room. Glory's mother was fond of Sturgis.

"Lant," she forced her voice huskily, "Glory isn't here; she slipped away from us in Mr. Collingwood's car. There is a note in her room. They are to be married by Mr. Tisdale."

Sturgis' clean, dark colour ebbed until he and his white shirt were almost of a shade. He was tall and muscular, but he actually seemed to shrink as he shifted his weight and stared wordlessly, like a shape out of a nightmare.

"A—note?" he managed to repeat. "I'd like to see it."

Mrs. Kirkland's broad, handsome face flushed painfully.

"I'm ashamed to give it to you," she confessed bluntly, "but she deserves it. Wait."

A moment later and Lant's smarting vision had leapt upon the following clever scrawl:

Dear Dad and Mother,

Late last evening I learnt conclusively that Nick can buy and sell Lant ten times over. That may not appeal to you at once, but it will later. I know my future is all you have to plan for, and you may bless your lucky stars that your little Glory had the brightness to land such a prize.

I am sorry for Lant, but sympathy doesn't go far at such a time. Still, as Nick knows it is his money I want, of the two, Lant has the best reason to be satisfied.

While you are reading this we shall be on our way to that funny little preacher beyond the Cove. By mid-day I'll be Mrs. Nicholas Collingwood. Prepare a good dinner when we come, and be nice to Nick. You might as well!

With love,
Glory.

Glory's father had been sitting tipped back against the wall. Now he brought his chair forward with a thump. The anger and humiliation of the moment expressed itself in a twist of grim humour.

"There're as good fish in the sea as ever were caught," he said.

At this open alliance with the jilted man, a murmur of approval ran noisily round the room. Lant straightened and turned to the girls framed in the kitchen doorway.

"About that fish in the sea, now"—he was trying to play up to Sam's well-meaning words—"there's a perfectly good pond waiting down the trail, and I'll promise to feed anyone who cares to take my bait." He paused to push back a thick lock streaking

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black across his forehead. "Don't all bite at once!" he added with a wan smile.

A cheer followed this challenge. No one had expected Lant Sturgis to be jilted lightly; it was more like him to get on his horse and take it out on Collingwood. The crowd had waited to back him in anything he might choose to do. Only one went beyond the cruel humour of the thing—Glory's cousin, Barbara. Detaching herself from the beribboned group, a straight girl, with thick, ruddy hair, and long-lashed grey eyes, stepped up into the room.

"I'll marry you, Lant," she flashed.

"Now?" Sturgis flamed back, staggered, but serious.

"Yes."

There was a moment's tense silence, then:

"All right; I'll saddle your pony." Lant walked to the door.

II.

The journey to town was, for the most part, a silent one. From time to time, as Barbara and Lant threaded the burning splendour of the passes, the latter looked curiously at his companion.

There had come to him the memory of a certain snowy day when she had berated him for "slipping away from" his spelling lesson to spend his pocket-money upon Glory.

Glory had not cared what he missed, so long as she had her fill of lemon-drops. *She* had skipped a whole afternoon school in order to spend gloriously what it had taken him a week to earn. But about Barbara—what a discomfiting stimulant she had been to him!

How he had almost hated her for stirring him up to take a college course when Glory had him running smoothly in the rut of money-making! It had occurred to him, sometimes, that the two of them fought for the possession of his mind and body. The body had won, now to be cast aside for a better opportunity.

Below, among the purple foothills, glimmered the town, with its dingy square and ugly court-house. Yesterday, from that very spot, the man had looked down through a mist of foolish glory. Suddenly he drew the useless license from his pocket and tore it to bits.

Hours later, while his wife made some purchases, Sturgis found himself outside the business streets, walking—walking for dear life! One sensation clutched him miserably; *he was married, and not to Glory*. *She* was in Collingwood's arms now.

The thin, pink little lips that had held him to her conception of success, were Collingwood's! Tortured beyond endurance by the picture, Sturgis entered the town again and turned into a *café* saloon.

The white-aproned attendant looked curiously at the ashen features of his customer, but in the act of serving him, turned to something even more interesting. It was then that Lant discovered Barbara advancing between the tables, her suffering grey eyes sweeping the room disappointedly.

"This isn't the doctor's surgery?" she murmured with distinct lowness, addressing the barman.

Startled into saneness, Sturgis slammed his glass untasted upon the counter.

"No," he interposed hastily, "that is further along. I'll show you." Outside he asked anxiously: "What, in Heaven's name, is the matter with your hand?"

Barbara unwrapped a painfully swollen palm. "There's a thorn in it. When we rode through the thicket—I got it then, trying to save my face, you know. It will have to be cut out."

"And you had that confounded thing in your hand all the time!" Lant's throat tightened. Only yesterday he had dug a tiny splinter from Glory's thumb, and she had all but fainted. "Those thorns are poisonous as the deuce," he blurted out. "Your hand will have to be cauterised, and not a minute to lose." Seizing her arm, he rushed her on, his own trouble forgotten. His danger hour had passed.

III.

Sturgis dismounted at his verandah and swung his wife down beside him.

"I wonder"—he spoke with an awkward impulse to make conversation—"if Moses has mewed himself to sleep. I had forgotten him."

"Who might Moses be?" asked Barbara, with interest.

"My new kitten." Sturgis flung open the door, and, striking a match, lighted a lamp on the reading-table. "Come here and I'll show you the cheeky little rascal."

Barbara dug a combative ball of grey fur, needle-like claws, and round, yellow eyes from the tobacco-jar.

"Uh-huh!" The new mistress cuddled the kitten against her warm throat. "When does he eat?"

"I have to warm his milk," Sturgis explained. "Wait till I get the coffee on." Lifting aside a heavy package, he examined it curiously. "Some weight, this. What is it—something explosive?"

Barbara rumpled the kitten.

"Books," she said carelessly. "Blackstone."

Her husband stared.

"Are you studying law?"

"No, but I thought you might."

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Sturgis opened the package and fingered the volumes carefully. Finally he flashed a glance at the girl who seemed absorbed with the antics of the little creature.

"Barbara," he said bluntly, "why did you throw yourself away on a practical joke? Why, with that devilish thing in your hand, did you take time to hunt these books—the one thing——" he caught himself up, too loyal in the past to confess a thwarted ambition. "Why," he went on, after a moment's silence, "did you walk into that bar-room to save me from myself? You knew where the doctor's surgery was."

"Lant Sturgis"—the girl's voice was low, a little hard—"you know that Glory and I have always clashed over you. She as your promised wife; I as something—let us call it

Lant straightened and turned to the girls framed in the kitchen doorway. "About that fish in the sea now— . . . there's a perfectly good pond waiting down the trail, and I'll promise to feed anyone who cares to take my bait."—

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—Detaching herself from the beribboned group, a straight girl, with thick, ruddy hair, and long-lashed grey eyes, stepped up into the room. "I'll marry you, Lant," she flashed.
[Page 305, col. 1.]

fate—that loathed your being warped and dwarfed by her selfishness. When your father left you that money, I was meddlesome enough to suggest a law course. Glory decided on cattle, and cattle won.

"When you made that good deal, I begged her to give you a chance then. More cattle! To-day, when I took up your light offer, it flashed over me that I was the door of your almost vanished opportunity. Now I want you, not to buy cattle, but to sell. Forget that you ever sat in the saddle day after day and night after night, and reach down and dig up your dead ambitions. We'll bring them to life together. I am good at that."

"Thank you," replied Lant gently. "I wonder, aren't you hungry?"

"Just starved," Barbara smiled over the kitten. "But warm that milk next. You have forgotten Moses."

"So I had — poor little beggar!" laughed Sturgis.

But an hour later, as he lay back in his chair, listening to such melodies as Barbara, despite her stiffened hand, could play, his face resumed its sombreness — with a difference.

One of the new volumes was on his knee, the pages closed upon a marking finger. The lamp had burnt itself out, but he did not know it. He was testing his wife's words. He was lifting the first spadeful of dirt from his buried ambitions. Suddenly he realised that the music had ceased.

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It was still—too still. Twisting in his seat, he saw by the flickering light of the fireplace, Barbara at the piano—cupped, as it were, in a hush that was louder than words—listening intently.

Along a thread of indeterminate vibrations, trembled a stealthy advance. There was a prowling rustle among the shrubbery, a whisper against the shutters.

Sturgis sensed the meaning of the growing hullabaloo with swift impatience. Glory had meant to take the "treats"—sweets, cigars, and suchlike—to the post-office, saving herself the "carousal," as she called it, and he had forgotten.

"The sweets and cigars are in the kitchen," he told Barbara, crossing to her and stooping to make himself heard. "I'll take them out and have an end to it."

"For shame," she laughed back at him. "Is that the way to treat company? You may want their votes before long. Go out to them while I light up and get ready. Where's the coal-oil?"

"In the big can at the end of the sink," Sturgis said, relieved. A moment later and he had stepped out the front way into the moonlight.

Instantly pandemonium changed to "Where's the bride? Bring out the bride, or we'll go and git her!"

"Barbara's filling the lamp," shouted Sturgis. "She sent me to ask you in. Come on, everybody."

By the time the last footstep had crossed the threshold, the lamp had been lighted, the reading-table pushed back with the rug rolled against it, and the new mistress stood there smiling a welcome. In another breath she had wheeled to the piano, and the rollicking strains of "Hunt the Buffalo" flooded the room. No other invitation was necessary. Boys and girls paired off and began to circle and swing.

For an hour Barbara led the rout, merging from one familiar tune to another, encouraging the fun with laughing glances over her shoulder. When the most enduring was glad to sit down, she sprang from the bench and signalled Lant to the dining-room.

"I don't know what we have in the cupboard," she said. "But no matter; I can cook——"

"No need—there is plenty for all," Sturgis assured her. "Cold meat, fresh bread, fruit, and salad. We shall have to make coffee."

"Let's get to work, then," she nodded. "They must be famished. It would be an insult to offer sweets and cigars now."

It is not in the power of man to resist a thrill of possession in the woman who "does him proud," be she only a substitute bride.

Watching Barbara, Sturgis warmed with unconscious pride. For the time his shattered dream flickered before the gallant spirit of her—flickered, faded, and vanished.

Serving the hungry mob, it seemed natural to be at her side, helping to pass this or that. When their hands or shoulders touched, a spark of vital force tingled along every nerve in his body; not such flame as Glory had kindled—that meant only her and *her* desires. This fire began the re-creation of the man he was meant to be, and burnt as long as Barbara's endurance lasted and the farthest "good-night" had echoed back from the passes.

It was four o'clock when the two, strangely bound, faced each other in the silence. Sturgis was the first to speak.

"You had better lie down," he said, noting his companion's sudden pallor. He motioned towards the bedroom on the right of the fireplace, and the girl winced. This snowy nook was daintily hung with Glory's own primrose tints, her name on the silver-backed brushes, her "lily-of-the-valley" in the cut-glass bottles.

"I couldn't sleep if I tried." Barbara's voice strove for steadiness. "It is too near day. I will do my hair, though. There is a comb in the bag I brought."

She drew a stool to the fire, and Sturgis, sitting there, too, had a good chance to study what manner of woman he had married. Barbara was larger than her fairylike cousin, but slight, with a slenderness that deceived.

Really, she was vital and strong. It showed in her shimmering wealth of hair—springing, slightly curling hair that never stayed "put" but never seemed untidy. It betrayed itself in the extraordinary length of her lashes, in the beautiful redness of cheek and lip, in the snowiness of neck and brow, in the sprinkle of golden flecks beneath her eyes.

Obsessed of Glory's extreme blondness, Lant had never before considered another type, but at this moment Barbara suited him. Watching the kitten tangle her hair as fast as her bandaged hand managed to straighten it, he finally took a turn himself. First he brushed the strands all of a length, till she sat there looking out of a shining tent; then he parted the meshes and braided them in two immense ropes.

"I'm going to let it hang," he decided. "I like to see a woman's hair down. It makes her more human."

He worked on busily until he had finished, then asked to see her wounded palm. The unwrapping, fomenting, and painting with a disinfectant took considerable time, so that when an embarrassing silence again fell,

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dawn thrust a rosy finger through the shutters, and the girl sprang up to fling wide the door and let in a spicy breath of the pines.

Early in the day Sturgis rode over to see the School Board at Fur Cove. He did not intend, now that Barbara bore his name, she should be a wage-earner, and she already had a contract for the next year.

The girl was not sorry to be alone. She was smarting over the swift, warm impulse that had led her to throw herself at a man's head, and she wanted time to harden herself to the future. One thing was certain—this place would never seem like home.

Curled up on the hearth, she looked doubtfully about her. Everything spoke of Glory's conception of fitness—colour-scheme, wall-paper, exquisite cushions of silk, pictures of the new school. Barbara's primitive sense of comfort, not unlike a man's, was outraged.

After a long, shrinking stare, she turned her eyes restfully on the leaping flame. That, at least, was satisfying. She liked the wind's rumble in the chimney, and the purr of the grey kitten cuddled in her arms. All at once she was sleepy—so sleepy! And then she was springing up to meet her husband's serious eyes.

"I may as well tell you——" he began, and hesitated. "I couldn't find the Board," he finally went on—"not a member of it. They are out with a posse, heading off Collingwood's car. It seems he insulted the Haley boys over the 'treats,' and when Dan Haley took it up, ran the car into a blind pass to dodge him. They will probably head this way. We may look for almost anything."

Barbara did not ask what he meant by "anything"; she knew. While neither Glory nor Collingwood deserved it, they must ally themselves against the very crowd they had, a few hours back, shaken hands with. There would be bloodshed, ending in a new feud.

The silver clock over the fireplace struck ten. The tones were very clear and deliberate. For two hours Lant and Barbara had been listening.

Sometimes, when the chimney grumbled or Moses gave his loud, husky purr, the two started and shuddered. Now, when the last of the ten strokes boomed, the thing they had strained their ears for came—a trembling thread of sound; the persistent, nearing growl of a motor-car speeding down the pass.

For hours, it seemed, the warning came, now low, now loud, then of a sudden snapped off short, and after an interval of silence a stumbling tread crossed the verandah, the door swung open, and Glory—her wedding-dress crusted with dust and burrs—swayed there, pointing back.

"Lant," she gasped, "oh, Lant! Nick is there—under the car!"

Stiffly, Sturgis stood up, sweeping the heavy hair from his forehead.

"Shall we need a light?" he asked, and when the tragic figure nodded, vanished into the kitchen.

Back by the door the two girls faced each other, their eyes clashing tumultuously. Then all three were running across the yard to the road.

There was not far to go. Just where the trail crooked into the lower road, an overturned car with smashed lamps was being righted by an outpost of the pursuing mob. Glory covered her eyes till the crushed form had been lifted from the ditch and covered with a rug; then she swept an hysterically angry look around the circle of white faces, ending with the man she had jilted.

"He acted the coward," she cried stormily, "and he was drunk! He might have killed *me!*"

"Oh!" breathed her cousin, shocked by such supreme selfishness. Barbara went close to the covered form and stooped, with her hands tugging at the shoulders. "Help me, Lant!" she begged. "Let us get him into the house!"

But Glory interposed sharply.

"No, no! How would that look? I must telegraph his people. I must get the insurance agent. My home is the proper place."

She stepped into the car, straightened the cushions, and touched the starter. The car snorted and moved forward. The girl backed around with a practised hand, stopped, and stood up.

"Put him in the tonneau," she ordered; "and, Lant, you get in and hold him there. Hurry! I want to get it over."

Sturgis took his wife's arm to help her in beside the driver, but she drew back.

"I'd rather not," she whispered. "But you go—it can't be helped. Stay as long as you are needed. I'll be all right." To decide the matter, she turned swiftly and went back to the house.

She had no language for the thing she must do. Steadily she took her marriage certificate from her travelling-bag, tore it across, and laid it with her wedding-ring on the table. Then, still afraid of weakening, she turned the light low and went out quickly, closing the door behind her.

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IV.

Sturgis crouched in the back of the car, steadying the muffled, stiffening figure, his strained eyes veering around to Glory's slim shape, steering skilfully up the winding trail. All about them were strange echoes of sound—the sobered retreat of the disbanding mob.

The house was already crowded when they slid into the yard, but Glory was conscious of but one presence. Barring a ghastly sense of tragedy, she was keenly happy. She now had all of Collingwood's wealth, and the man of the moment at a lifted finger.

As Sturgis swung her from the car, she turned from the neighbours that came silently out to serve her, and clung sobbing, dry-eyed, on his shoulder.

"Forgive me, dear," she whispered. "I was a mercenary little wretch; but I have suffered. We'll begin all over again."

The man whose past she had been gazed across her head to an open window of the cabin, where tender hands were stretching a sheet over what was left of Nicholas Collingwood. A sense of nausea came over him at the clinging touch. His head lifted; his brain was clear. Firmly he loosened the clutching fingers.

"Go in now," he said to Glory. "There are plenty to help you, but I'll be back in the morning, no doubt. Good-night."

The trail was moon-silvered, and Lant was soon home. He was not much surprised to find Moses alone on the cooling hearthstone. He had reasoned it out that way. With scarcely a glance at the torn document and the ring, he began plundering the rooms of all that suggested the past, pitching armloads of costly stuff into the fireplace and kicking the back-log into hot flame.

Leaving silver and ivory, silk and cut-glass, velvet and fragrant scent to blacken and pop and steam, he ran to the stable, and, without stopping to saddle up, rode away. One of the trails to town he had just traversed. The other, a short, narrow foot-pass, he took at a gallop.

Barbara had not reckoned with this early pursuit, nor the ease with which her husband's big, rangy beast came pounding along the trail. When she realised that he was close, there was a sharp, stumbly race between them, a ripping of vines, a flying of crisping leaves. Once her pony came to its knees, and she jerked it up desperately, sobbing, big, dry sobs. Finally, as Sturgis overtook her and laid hand on her rein, she faced him defiantly.

"You are the kind to do this, Lant," she said, "but if you will use sense you'll see that my way is best. It will amount to that in the end. When I took advantage of your challenge, I expected you to live your own life—to help you only as a comrade might. I reckoned without Glory. To-night, when she and I faced each other in the house she planned, I knew it was Collingwood's wealth that had parted you. Now——"

"Have you done?" interrupted Sturgis patiently. "We have all the rest of our lives to thrash this out; but I'll tell you, once for all, there is no Collingwood, and there is no Glory. Come now—I want to go home."

Sturgis was bold enough to think his argument had settled the matter, but the minute he loosened the pony it was off in the trail. The big animal followed with difficulty here, but at last it came up, blundered into the other horse, and stopped. Barbara screamed as her husband lunged, and snatched her bodily from her saddle to a place in front of him.

"My hand!" she cried; "my bad hand—you're hurting me!"

"Well, isn't it *my* hand, too?" he said unfeelingly. "If I've got to maul you home, I will do it, though it goes against the grain to hurt a woman."

"But, Lant——"

"Shut up!" urged Sturgis fondly. "You make me wild. Can't you see there must have been something lacking in the past, or I wouldn't be here now, *with you?* Don't you remember when we were kids, and Glory boasted that I was all hers because she knew I would always buy her lemon-drops? That was the sum of it! I wanted Glory because she wanted me, and—it was my nature to idealise—she meant—love. Now love means *you*. It has come by strange roads, but the knowledge is here. Barbara, be good. I want my dinner, and I want your kiss. Honey, you never kissed me in all your life."

The girl blushed so furiously that Lant felt the hotness of her face against his own. He felt her rapturous tears, too, and, last, the shy, sweet pressure of her virgin lips.

"Thank God!" he whispered, and gave the big horse his head, the pony ambling behind. Flecks of moonlight caught him smiling through something that sparkled suspiciously on his lashes; a night-bird called to its mate; but Sturgis realised but one thing—that he held his wife in his arms.

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UP AGAINST IT.

By Lesbia Robinson.

Harrowing Holiday Experiences, Illustrated by Leading Humorous Artists.

"Short Commons"—Mr. H. H. Harris' warning of what may be expected at those boarding-houses where the rationing system runs riot.

Holidays are not always the happy, untroubled affairs which, according to railway posters and guide-books, they ought to be. It is not unreasonable to expect that for at least one fortnight in the year the ills that do so frequently beset us should cease, but, unhappily, a return ticket to Bournemouth or Ilfracombe carries with it no guarantee that we shall enjoy one perfect day, let alone fourteen of them.

Nor has the war assisted matters in this respect, since one can depend upon nothing save the absence of porters at the stations and the presence of an unjustifiable number of fellow human beings on the chosen beach.

There is nothing more distressing than to have a long-anticipated holiday marred at the outset by evasive luggage or the immediate proximity of crumb-scattering infants. The most-to-be-pitied people at holiday-time are, of course, the mothers of families, since for them a holiday simply means keeping house at Bognor instead of Brixton, and preventing their offspring seeking watery graves at the same time. Moreover, seaside lodgings offer such a prolific field for disaster, and the distracted parent is in a continual ferment lest ten-year-old Bob shall break the springs of the debilitated sofa, or the baby swallow one of the yellow china pigs that deface the sideboard.

It is a lamentable fact that a holiday which begins propitiously does not always live up to its fair beginnings throughout its whole course. You may be wafted to the chosen Mecca on the wings of a crack express, companioned by an attractive luncheon-basket and the *élite* of the book-stall, only to find that "Ocean View" is half-a-mile from the beach, and the "m..les

"A Bathing Bungle"—the horror of the man who enters the wrong tent, depicted by Mr. Bertram Prance.

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"Stealing a March on Him"—the pathetic plight of a trustful bather, illustrated by Mr. Reg. F. Smith.

of golden sand" exist only in the imagination of an enraptured journalist.

In the days of cheap fares, when one member of the party could "run down" and see that the much-vaunted sea view could be obtained without undue dislocation of the neck and that "the spacious lounge" was something more than two chairs and an umbrella-stand, there was less risk about seeking pastures new. Now that such caution is too expensive, one must either go to the old, well-tried haunts or put one's faith in seductive advertisements and the often prejudiced reports of one's friends.

This year the question of food will harrow the souls of holiday-makers, since to boarding-house and hotel proprietors the war is a legitimate excuse for tallow-like butter, yawning sugar-bowls, and languid fish. Seaside appetites bow to no Food Controller, the days of bountiful teas are banished, and what are two ounces of bread or cake to repair the ravages of a ten-mile walk or an afternoon at cricket or tennis?

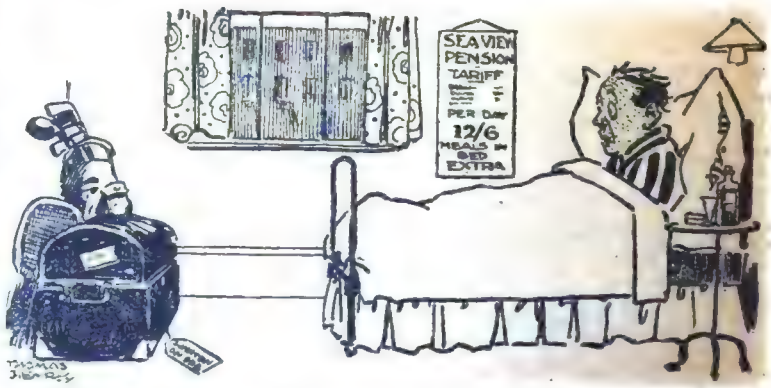
Most people have a good deal of sympathy with holiday-makers who are condemned to take their holidays when all the summer attractions of the place are over. Often the sympathy is misplaced. There *are* people who prefer a deserted parade, and to whom Paradise does not close with the closing of the pier band-stand. This was not the case with Mr. Closefist. With him it was solely a spirit of quite unnecessary thrift, over which his wife's partiality for Pierrots, coach drives, and such harmless diversions was quite unable to prevail. Year after year he insisted on departing seawards in October, until Mrs. Closefist waxed rebellious and resolved to cure him.

With a woman's unerring instinct she tackled her spouse through his pocket. Coach drives were over, so Mrs. Closefist hired taxis to the various beauty spots; the Pierrots, whose chaste performance could be witnessed for one shilling, had departed, wherefore she booked seven-and-sixpenny seats at the local theatre, and, what is more, compelled her husband to pay for them.

True, she had some wordy battles, but she stuck to her guns, and by the end of the fortnight Mr. Closefist had completely revised his theories, and discovered that after all October was rather chilly for holiday-making, and possibly they might try August next year.

Few holiday experiences can have been more terrible than that of the girl who was invited to spend three weeks with an Aunt in the wildest part of Yorkshire, and arrived, armed to the teeth with serviceable tweeds, brogues, and sweaters, to find a regiment encamped near the village, and a dance impending on that very evening. Then, indeed, Iris lifted up her voice and wept, while Aunt Katherine lamented the fact that she had forgotten to warn her niece of the festivity.

"If only you had something in the fancy dress line," she wailed, "it would save the



Mr. Thomas Henry gives us the unhappy fate of the man who develops measles at the boarding-house, and has to spend his holiday in bed and pay extra for doing so.

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situation. I'm sure Captain Ellis said some of them were going to wear fancy costumes."

"Are you sure?" Iris brightened instantly, and took a frantic header into her trunk.

"Oh, yes, my dear," Aunt Katherine assured her, interpreting a casual suggestion of Captain Ellis' as if it were an accepted fact. "Have you anything that'll do?"

For answer, Iris waved a pair of shell-pink silk pyjamas about her head. "I think these will create a sensation," she said with a chuckle.

They did—more especially as every-

Mr. Cottington Taylor depicts the trepidation of the young man who finds a bulldog in possession of his garments, and is too shy to ask the dog's mistress to call him off.

"A Painful Position"—the collapse of the inexperienced *ski-er*, portrayed by Mr. Treyer Evans.

one else was in correct evening dress, and the inhabitants of Moorburne were godly folk, who favoured flannelette underwear, and regarded pyjamas as the birthright of the masculine sex. Backed up by Captain Ellis and his brother officers, Iris brazened it out, but even Aunt Katherine's pathetic explanations did not remove the impression, and her niece's three weeks included few social festivities other than those provided by the British Army. They rose to the occasion nobly, and the trunkful of fripperies for which Iris wifed saw considerable active service.

It is hardly surprising that the one item which Captain Ellis insists upon in the trousseau is a pair of shell-pink silk pyjamas.

Perhaps the most serious plight of all is to be taken ill while away on a holiday; meals in the bedroom are always extra, and it is extremely irritating to have to pay more for a cup of arrowroot one cannot eat than for the roast beef and vegetables you could have eaten under normal conditions. There is nothing more depressing than to lie in a strange bed flanked by medicine bottles and surrounded by unfamiliar furniture, and gaze at the tennis racquet, golf-clubs, and other outdoor implements you had hoped to wield with such enjoyment.

"Nothing Doing"—Mr. Douglas Jefferies points out the disappointment which awaits the family who take their holidays when the entertainments have just finished and the rain has just begun.

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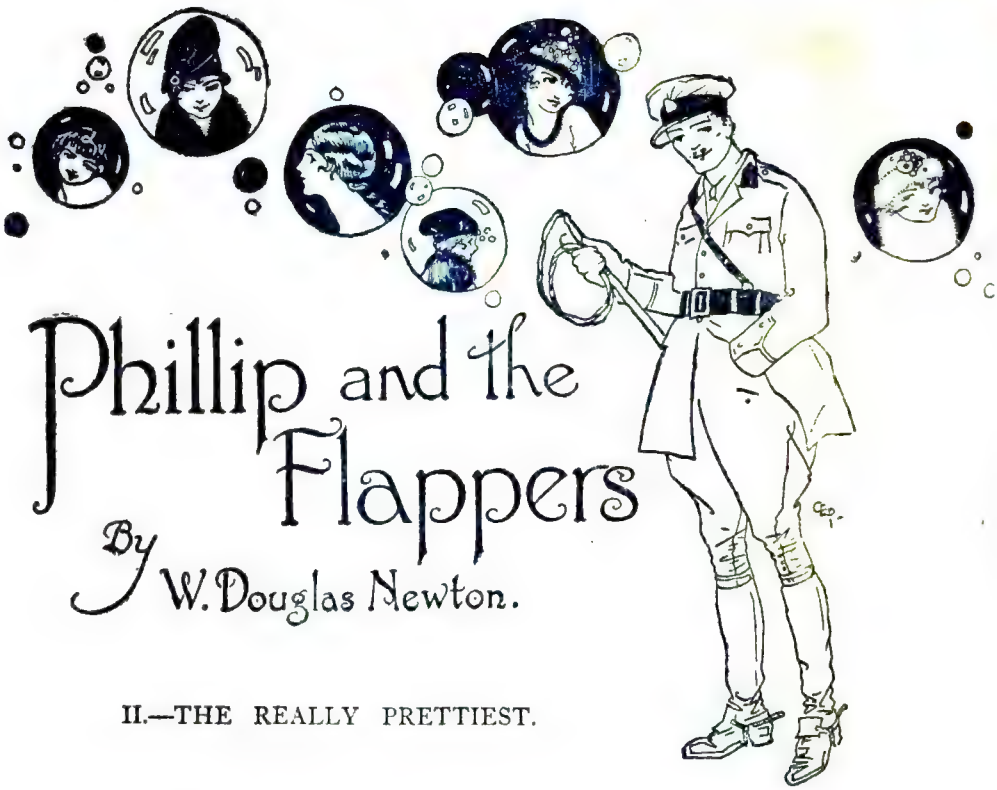

Phillip and the Flappers

By W. Douglas Newton.

II.—THE REALLY PRETTIEST.

Phillip is a young and entirely charming Staff Officer, with a *penchant* for the society of flappers. Behind a somewhat flippant exterior he hides a positive genius for coming up top-dog—a gift which brings chagrin to the heart of Ernest, a fellow-sub., and gives Beryl, the prettiest of all the flappers, and the heroine of the following joyous story, a golden half-hour far from the watchful eye of a dragon-like Aunt.

I.

Cornelius, Tempy-Loot and Class A brain, gathered up the shrapnel-garnished, perfectly-tunicked Phillip (you'll remember there are two l's in that, and it's said slow) and carried him off to a Fair. It was just the ordinary sort of Fair of cheerful and pretty-faced robbery, and the object was to provide Thomas Atkins with asbestos-lined sleeping vests, or something like that.

Having gathered Phillip to the Fair, Cornelius apparently left that bright young man to the tender mercies of the Bradbury snatchers. But he didn't quite. After an exorbitant minute or two he returned, threading his way through bran-tubs and dips and the raffling fire of cushions and table-centres. He approached Phillip with a "How-we-brought-the-good-news-to-Ghent" gait.

"No, Miss Dorcas, I never use a hair-tidy in the trenches!" he called to a buccaneer flapper on raffle bent. And then: "Oh, Phillip, the prettiest of her kind is here, and I have seen her. Come along, the very and only prettiest."

"I know," answered Phillip heroically. "They all are. Every little flap"—he caught the eye of the slim, silken, pigtailed pirate trying to snare his soul in raffle—"every little Junior woman one meets these days is the really prettiest. It's most heart-shattering."

"Oh, but a fact this time!" cried Cornelius. "Oh, really! Come along to my little F.O. behind that 'Fancy and Frightfulness' stall, and you will see her. The really and only girl in the——"

"I've heard Robey mention the same home truth," said Phillip. "Oh, must I take a ticket, Miss Aphrodite? Can't I have a moratorium? I say, Cornelius, as an expert in Home Life and the Habits of Brass Hats, do you think the dear Brigadier would really like a pair of hem-stitched, woolly baa-lamb smoking shoes?—I mean, would 'Duggy' Haig love him all the more

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in them? Of course there *is* that cholera belt in green with the mud-coloured sunflowers on it——"

"Get him the shoes," said Cornelius judicially. "They will goad him to another great offensive."

"I don't suppose you'll win it," said the Flapper, as she gave Phillip a five-shilling ticket for a two-shilling article. "People aren't meant to win things at bazaars."

"I wish I had your optimism, Miss Diana," sighed Phillip. "But I always win. I have a curse. I am the natural prey to all that is vicious in d'oylies; sateen table-centres with bilious flowers on them fly to me like homing pigeons to the something or other."

"Don't be an ass!" commented Cornelius. "You grow too fluent, my lad. Come and look at *her*. Over here!" Cornelius dragged the shining young man past the awful attractions of the "Lump Sugar and Petrol" stall. "Just round the corner is this beautiful sight for wan Tempys. Slim, fresh, tall, young—oh, enormously young—eyes, hair, lips!"

"Is it human?" asked Phillip. "Or do I think of a number?"

"Such a demure—oh, halt, Phillip! By the right—half-turn! There!—there in the open! Look! My dear old thing, look!"

"Shut up!" said Phillip. "I don't want to think. I just want to be dazzled."

II.

Well, really, Cornelius, in spite of his being in the Intelligence, was right. The Flapper was like that. One looked at her. One was dazzled. One asked for more dazzle.

She was not really so tall, only the slimness of her gave her a sort of swaying height, and she moved with a superb erectness that carried off the effect. And after that daintiness in line and movement and air—well, just youth, just freshness and spring, with fur round it and snuggling to it and making it jolly and brisk and open-air in the thoroughly attractive British way.

As flappers went, she had a demure grace, a shy grace, a rather "fearful-of-aunt" timidity. But probably that wasn't really true. When she lifted her lashes, her eyes were dark and nicely naughty, and the splendid copper-red riot of her hair meant bravado and daring and all that which has fire in it. And you will not need to be told that the colour of her skin was that breathless curd-white that goes with copper-red hair, or that the red of her mouth burnt like the petal of a flower in the cool and delicious whiteness of her skin.

Oh, Cornelius, in spite of himself, had been thoroughly right.

She came in a little timidly, this "prettiest," shy in the face of that great hall full of clothes of feminine gender, high voices, and high prices. She was not alone. It is one of the tragedies of the world that the "prettiests" never are. The grimmest thing in aunts stalked before. You know how grim aunts can be; this aunt exceeded any aunt you know. She was a B.A. in grimmery.

Cornelius wilted at the sight of her.

The Flapper flung a quick glance round the world. Cornelius ceased to wilt.

"I'm hit," he murmured. "If I don't have tea with her I die. Did you note how her glance fixed itself on me, Phillip? That was a S.O.S. glance, too. Phillip, let me tell you that was a S.O.S."

He expanded his Sam Browne. Cornelius recognised that, as a man in the Intelligence, he must take a larger size in

"I don't suppose you'll win it," said the Flapper, as she gave Phillip a five-shilling ticket for a two-shilling article. . . . "I wish I had your optimism, Miss Diana," sighed Phillip.

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hats than the ordinary staff fry like Phillip. The Army Board and his own grey-matter enabled him to see things and do things better than other people—like Phillip. When he said that the Princess of all Flappers had sent out a S.O.S. look, he knew he was right. He saw in the glance of the "prettiest" that she was asking to be deprived of Aunt.

"A S.O.S. look, Phillip," gurgled Cornelius. "She wants help. She demands salvation."

"Help? Salvation?" queried Phillip. "Do you think she takes you for a lifeboat man—or is it a Revivalist preacher?"

Cornelius looked with scorn at the shining figure of Phillip. There were occasions when Phillip said things that almost surprised *him*, but a look at those perfect clothes was reassuring. No one who dressed so well as Phillip had any time to spare for the cultivation of brain.

"One day you'll have a rush of humour to the head, Phillip," he said with dignity. "It will be fatal. I'd guard against the germs, if I were you, old thing. But, really, that little girl does ask to be saved. She knows that she will have a perfectly frightful time with that Aunt, unless someone goes to her rescue."

The Aunt was waiting with a terrible and scrupulous care for the Flapper to come under her wing, away from the temptations and follies that lurk in bazaars. The young men regarded the Aunt. She was most intimidating. She was an Aunt of the Steely Eye. She was obviously an Aunt who Knew All about Tempys and the evils thereof. If that Aunt looked at them they would be carried out on stretchers suffering from moral frost-bite.

Cornelius gulped sturdily.

"Somebody—er—you know, must—er—get rid of, or—er—otherwise remove that lethal Aunt."

Phillip nodded.

"Good!" he said. "While you chloroform her, I'll run for a taxi."

"Don't be a priceless ass!" snorted Cornelius. "Be sane. You see, while *she* has to trail behind that—that Female Tank, that perfectly ripping little girl will have an aching time. Somebody must step in, and give her tea and laughter. Look out, old son, they are coming this way!"

The Aunt and the "prettiest" came by. The two heart-fractured young men drew into the shade of a jungle by Harridge's. Not that it mattered. As far as the Aunt went, her head was so high that she was incapable of seeing anything below Major-General rank. But that was an asset. She was barraged by the mob before she realised she was cut off from her Flapper. And the "prettiest"—the "prettiest" was before them.

"Would you care to take a ticket in my raffle?" said Phillip with terrible promptness. "My friend Hereward, here, was wounded in the war. We are raising a fund to provide him with a new brain. Not a large brain, of course; nothing beyond his means."

"Oh, really, I say——" blurted out Cornelius.

The "prettiest" laughed. She had the jolliest laugh. There was the colour of her own eyes' brightness, a fire of the bravado of her gorgeous hair in that laugh. It was the fine, crisp, naughty laugh you would expect from her.

"It doesn't sound really expensive," she smiled. "I might."

"Oh, really, you know!" blurted Cornelius.

A grim, Hindenburg voice rose up.

"Beryl! Where are you, Beryl?" With the briskest, warmest, ruefullest of smiles at the pair, Beryl was off to Aunt.

"Well, I always thought Beryl the most captivating of names," murmured Phillip. "And now I know I'm right."

"I don't see that it helps," growled Cornelius. "I mean the name."

"It doesn't," said Phillip cheerily. "It's merely pleasant."

"Oh, I see—quite. But I want to have tea with it, not dream of it. Dreaming won't help us—or Beryl."

"No," said Phillip vaguely. "No; perhaps you are right. What will help? This seems the moment when the man of grasp will carry all before him."

Cornelius beamed. Cornelius expanded.

"Right again. This is the moment when the man of snap gets there. This is the moment when a man of dash and deviltry gains the prize."

"I had that suspicion, too," said Phillip easily. "Please do some Mark IV. deviltry, Hereward."

"Not so much Hereward," snapped Cornelius. "You know infernally well you nearly spoilt the whole thing just now. You must go carefully, you know."

"I wish I had your *finesse*," said Phillip smiling—only Cornelius was not wise to that smile. "When they sent me to the Army they forgot to pack my tablet of *finesse* in the valise. But continue, Hilaire Belloc, expound how Beryl is to be won."

"Well, that Aunt must be tackled. She's terrible, but it must be done. We must get her away from Beryl, or Beryl from her. We must—must mislay her, or lose her, or something——"

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They looked round the great hall seething with prettiness and plunder. The place was packed. It did not seem the best *terrain* for the elimination of aunts. Phillip grinned with amiable idiocy.

"Do you think we might raffle her?"

"Oh, lord," snarled Cornelius in disgust. "We'll never do it. That sweet little girl is lost. Even I cannot fight against the folly of the woodenest head in the B.E.F."

"Well," murmured Phillip, in (apparent) self-defence, "some lads have all the dash and deviltry, while others are merely — er — human."

"Would you care to take a ticket in my raffle?" said Phillip with terrible promptness. "My friend Hereward, here, was wounded in the war. We are raising a fund to provide him with a new brain." . . . The "prettiest" laughed. She had the jolliest laugh.

"I can believe that," said Cornelius, rising about 15,000 feet in brain power above the shining Staff-Lieutenant. "You can thank your two stars, Phillip, that I am here to handle this tricky business. Lucky for you——"

Phillip glanced towards a sudden gap in the bazaaring mob. In that gap was a grim Aunt, also a bright, crisp, perfectly adorable girl. And the perfectly adorable Beryl looked at them, and, perfectly adorably, smiled.

"There's Beryl," cried Phillip. "Now's your time to prove the man in you. Get busy, Cornelius."

Cornelius braced his mind.

"Oh—yes, oh—of course, musn't lose a fraction of time. See how she smiled at me? We've got to go and—well, get Aunt to obliterate herself, or smile kindly on us, or . . ."

"Well, why not go up and say, 'How d'ye do?'"

"Oh, my sacred *chapeau*," groaned Cornelius. "Of all the teak heads! But, no! Phillip, my dear old 'returned-empty,' from out of the mouth of a babe and a confirmed idiot has come wisdom. That's what we'll do."

"I do have moments almost of intelligence," said Phillip gratefully. Again, Cornelius might have noticed his smile, but Cornelius was too occupied with Cornelius.

"That's just what we'll do. We rush up to Aunt as if we had known her for ever. We say how jolly it is to see her radiant face once more, and how much younger she is than last time. We just rush her. We—you must carry it off with a swift whirlwind bombardment movement, Phillip. Don't give her time to bite. Catch hold of her hand, gush, simply dizzy her with eloquence."

"Oh, *I* do that? No—no, Cornelius, this is not the time to be generous. Too much depends on the—the dash and deviltry of the handling. I know I am not worthy. The Aunt-snatch bit is yours."

"Don't argue; we haven't time. Get busy. It's got to be done. Someone must confuse Aunt, while I—I mean you're the most fitted to look foolish—I mean most fitted to do the trick."

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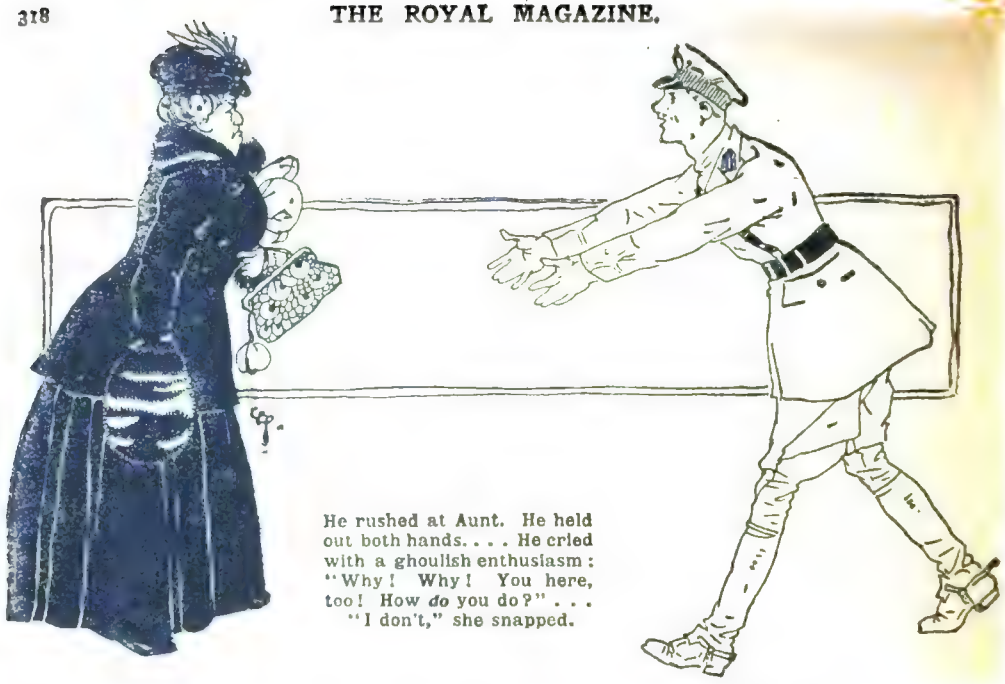

He rushed at Aunt. He held out both hands. . . . He cried with a ghoulish enthusiasm: "Why! Why! You here, too! How *do* you do?" . . . "I don't," she snapped.

"Someone has misled you, Cornelius," said Phillip placidly. "I am really utterly incapable of coping with an Aunt. I don't know the first move in Aunting. I don't know how one advances, or bows, or doesn't."

"Triple ass," snarled Cornelius. "You'll ruin everything. Come on. Leave all to me."

Phillip came on smiling. Cornelius could not have noted that smile now. Cornelius could not see it.

Phillip was, very definitely, behind.

The Aunt loomed up more formidably with every step they took. She looked very much what the dragon must have looked when St. George muttered: "At it, my lad, no burking." Cornelius gritted his teeth and plunged at Aunt.

Beryl saw them coming. Beryl abruptly buried her delectable nose in her muff, and giggled. Somehow it was to Phillip that the giggle went. The Aunt turned from her survey of silver-mounted eider-downs, and saw Cornelius.

She saw Cornelius heaving forward in battle array. Her figure took to itself rigidity. She congealed. Her eyes took a glassy surface of ice. She glared, and she remained calm.

She stood there in a perfectly horrid calm watching the rush of Cornelius. Phillip giggled. He could see no signs of dizziness in Aunt. He rather thought Cornelius had misjudged Aunt. In just such an attitude as Aunt's had the Old Guard withstood the shocks of the British cavalry at Waterloo.

Phillip became more definitely behind. He moved at an incline, left. As he moved he caught Beryl's eye. Two pairs of eyes smiled sympathetically.

Cornelius arrived at Aunt.

He rushed at Aunt. He held out both hands. He grinned with all his face and ears and hair. He effused. He gushed. He cried with a ghoulish enthusiasm:

"Why! Why! You here, too! How DO you do?"

The Aunt stared at him without a crinkle in her attitude.

"I don't," she snapped.

You who have seen Sergeant Billy Wells flush-hit a man at the moment that man thought he was dancing in to deliver the neatest knockout in the history of the ring, will be able to realise something of Cornelius' check.

"Eh?" he gasped. And then he remembered what every man must do. He rushed in again. "Oh, very good joke," he said. "Fine! And you look so well. So young—younger—than, er, you ought to be. And so pleasant to meet you, unexpected, and all, but so pleasant—oh, infernally. Isn't this a charming place! All the decorations—you know—er——"

Cornelius ran slowly out of deviltry. Conversation with the Sphinx is not the bright affair it might be. The Aunt was a relative on her father's side to the Sphinx. She was a real believer in attrition. She attritioned. She let Cornelius babble on, and she stood and stared, and froze him. He ran down. He simply gaped and burbled. He stopped.

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The Aunt looked at him carefully from his trench boots to the Staff band round his cap.

She said refrigeratingly:

"You're not, I take it, irrevocably insane?"

"Oh, no—no, that is, not to-day," bleated Cornelius. Where was Phillip? Phillip really ought to be busy, taking off the crushing attack with a flanking stroke. Phillip—really Phillip was proving himself Phillip, and a chump.

"I thought you weren't really insane," said the overpowering Aunt. "I should hate to be angry with you in that case. With the half-witted, of course, it's another matter. One must be firm." She petrified Cornelius with an implacable glance. "I don't know you. I don't want to know you. You're not at all the type of domestic freak I can even suffer gladly. You're unpleasant. I don't think the public should be exposed to you. I think you ought to be put in a safe place and locked in. If I said what I really thought of deleterious young men like you, I'd hurt your feelings. Now perhaps you'll explain the meaning of yourself? Why did you charge down on me like a minor omnibus? Why did you behave like a Dervish, sir? Please explain."

"Perhaps it's all a mistake," he stuttered. "You see, in the distance, and with the light behind you, you reminded me of someone—my old Uncle—I mean great-aunt . . ."

The Aunt smote him to silence with a glare.

"I will call a Provost-Marshal, sir," she snorted. "I'll put an end to your frightfulness very quickly. You are dissolute. You are a shocking example of Military Depravity. Remove yourself. Beryl! Beryl! Come here!"

Then a curious thing happened. There was no answer from Beryl. There was no Beryl to answer.

The rampant Aunt, the crushed and filleted Cornelius glared about them for Beryl.

There was no Beryl.

Cornelius, with a spasm of rage, saw more than that. There was no Phillip either.

The Aunt stalked off.

"You have even frightened my niece away," she fired at Cornelius as she went. "I don't wonder. You have disgusted her."

After an hour-and-a-half's search Cornelius discovered Phillip. Phillip was in the most secret recess of the tea-room. And it was Beryl who had poured out his tea.

"Phillip!" he howled. "You unmitigated beast! You——"

"This is my young friend, Athelstan, Miss Beryl," said Phillip. "This is the brilliant lad I spoke of. His great forte is *finesse* and dash——"

Cornelius glared at Phillip.

Phillip smiled. Beryl and Phillip rose up smiling, and went to seek an Aunt. Cornelius did not move. He did not attempt to slaughter Phillip. For the first time he realised that there was something in Phillip's smile.

After an hour-and-a-half's search he found Phillip. Phillip was in the most secret recess of the tea-room. And it was Beryl who had poured out his tea. "Phillip!" he howled. "You unmitigated beast. You——"

(Next month Phillip champions the cause of a damsel in distress over an unhappy love affair, and brings off a brilliant coup on her behalf.)

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THE BOLT THAT JAMMED

By E. R. Punshon.

"The best laid schemes o' mice and men
Gang aft a-gley."

Frank Lindsay frowned as he tied up his pony and strode towards the house. His partner, Willy Blair, was still lounging idly on the verandah, as he had been doing all morning while Frank had been out in the fields. Rhodesian tobacco plantations, if they are to be successful, do not allow time for sitting about verandahs, and Frank's temper did not improve as he noted the whisky bottle close by Blair's side.

"Taking it pretty easy this morning, aren't you, Blair?" he said shortly.

Blair looked up and scowled.

"What's that to do with you?" he demanded.

"A good deal, I should imagine, considering you're my partner," answered Frank. "I think I've a right to expect you to do some work sometimes."

"I do as much as you," snarled Blair. "If you aren't satisfied, why don't you buy me out?"

"Right!" said Frank. "I'll give you £800—a quarter cash down, a quarter at the end of this year, and the other half next year. Will that suit you?"

Blair looked blacker than ever. He had not expected to be taken so promptly at his word, and he had not thought that Frank could raise the necessary money—a point on which, as a matter of fact, Frank himself was less confident than he appeared. But he felt that something had to be done to put an end to a situation which was rapidly growing intolerable, while Blair, on his side, was thinking that with £200 in cash he could leave this beastly country and go home—and home meant Molly Winter and the first chance of winning her.

It would be odd, he thought, if being on the spot, with ample leisure and a supply of ready cash, he could not cut Frank out and secure Molly for himself. The idea of using the money Frank would supply with which to win Molly appealed very strongly to him in his present uncharitable mood.

"The place is worth more than £800," he grumbled, with truth, for it was one of the best and most flourishing tobacco farms in the country. "You ought to give me more."

"Can't," said Frank. "That's my limit. I'm not saying the place isn't worth more, but it jolly soon won't be if you spend all your time drinking whisky and never do a stroke of work. You've hardly been in the fields this week."

Blair scowled. At that moment he hated Frank very bitterly, for there was truth in what he said.

"All right, I'll take your offer," he returned. "Give me the coin and I'll clear, and you can run the place to suit your own ideas."

Frank went away and returned with the £200 in bank-notes. It was an added grievance in Blair's eyes that his partner should have so much money by him without having told him; but Frank had been meditating making this proposal for some time; in fact, ever since their relations had become so strained.

"I'll ride in with you when you go," Frank said, as Blair signed the receipt and pushed it over, "and we can see a lawyer and have it fixed up properly." Then, to change the subject, he began to talk about a lion that was doing a lot of mischief in the neighbourhood and had even killed one or two natives. "I shall have a slap at him to-night," he finished.

After dinner he got his little ·256 Mannlicher from the gun-rack, cleaned it carefully, and loaded the magazine ready for night. Both partners used this weapon, which is big enough for all except the very largest game, and is very light and easy to handle. They possessed in addition a heavy ·450 rifle and a couple of shot-guns. The shot-guns and the big ·450—all the guns were kept together in the same rack—were the property of the estate and would pass with it, but the Mannlichers were private property, and Frank

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wondered whether to offer to buy the one belonging to Blair. He might not want it if he went home, as he had talked of doing lately, and if—if his own dreams were ever realised and Molly Winter came out to share his life and fortunes, a second rifle would be very useful.

"Going to take your Mannlicher?" he asked, "or would you like to sell it?"

Blair growled some angry response that might have been either an acceptance or a refusal, so Frank shrugged his shoulders, got up, and went out to the fields again. Blair continued to devote himself to the whisky bottle. The more he drank the more sullen grew his temper, the deeper his conviction that he had been trapped and cajoled. No doubt it would be a splendid revenge to go home and cut Frank out with Molly, but that Frank should be so eager to get rid of him was a deep and unforgivable injury. Well, perhaps the lion would settle his account for him. But that was not likely. In Rhodesia a lion is counted as vermin, and shooting one scarcely counts for more than does trapping a rat in England.

As he sat drinking and brooding over his injuries the English mail came in and Blair turned to his letters. There were only two or three for him and there were seven or eight for Frank—an added injury. The first one he opened contained an item of news that startled and angered him exceedingly, for it was to the effect that Molly Winter ("you remember her? the girl your partner, Frank Lindsay, was so struck with," wrote his correspondent) had inherited a small legacy of £500, and was using some of it for a holiday trip to Rhodesia in the company of Mrs. Wells, the wife of a Government official who was returning to her husband after a holiday at home.

Blair crumpled up the letter with a curse, and through his whole being ran a flame of white-hot jealousy. What outrageous luck! But luck had always favoured Frank and been against him. His plan of cutting out Frank with the money supplied by Frank himself was now utterly ruined. Why, she might appear at this spot almost any minute! The letter said she was starting at once, and the place where Wells was stationed lay up country. To get to it they were almost sure to pass this way, and Molly would arrive to find Frank sole owner of a flourishing tobacco plantation and he himself bought out and at a loose end.

There would be plenty, too, to tell her how industrious and capable Frank Lindsay was, and to hint at his own devotion to the whisky bottle. If only he had not been fool enough to accept Frank's offer, which now appeared to him as a piece of discreditable trickery. Very likely Frank had known Molly was coming, and that was why he had wanted to get rid of his partner.

Blair drank some more whisky, and the more he drank the more bitter he felt, and the more convinced that he had been the victim of a cunning plot. He told himself moodily that he hoped the lion would avenge him, reflecting that in that case the receipt in Frank's pocket would be almost certainly destroyed, no one would know anything about their bargain, Frank's relatives at home would probably be willing to sell his share in the farm very cheaply—they would have no idea of its real value—and then it would be he who would be able to lay at Molly's feet a flourishing tobacco plantation of which he was sole owner.

Without quite knowing how he got there, Blair found himself standing in front of the gun-rack. The magazine rifle is a great invention, but the weapon has one weakness—the bolt may jam at the critical moment and its bearer be left defenceless. A tiny bit of grit, barely visible, will sometimes do it, and many a good man has lost his life in this way.

Suppose Frank's rifle jammed to-night! Suppose it was—helped to jam!

With eager, nervous fingers, glancing over his shoulder, starting at every sound, Blair did what he had to do.

Hurriedly he put back the rifle in its place and positively ran back to the verandah. What was left of the whisky he drank off at a draught, and it seemed scarcely to moisten his parched tongue. He went indoors and flung himself down on his bunk, listening and waiting.

After a time Frank came in. There was an exclamation of pleasure as he saw his letters on the table waiting for him and then silence as he became immersed in his correspondence. But presently the wakeful listener heard him exclaim aloud and begin to sing softly to himself. Evidently he had got news that pleased and excited him greatly, probably the same intelligence of Molly Winter's prospective arrival that Blair had received.

Louder and louder rose his song. He was walking up and down the verandah now as though his joy must express itself in action.

"Stop that row, can't you?" Blair shouted suddenly.

"All right, old man," answered Frank good-humouredly. "Any news in your letters?"

"No," snapped Blair. "Any in yours?"

"Nothing much," answered Frank. Then

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with elaborate unconcern, he added: "Sis says Miss Winter is coming out to visit the Wells."

In spite of his efforts to conceal it, his whole voice vibrated with the eager joy he felt, and never had Blair thought it possible for one man to hate another as he felt he hated Frank Lindsay. And it was his own folly that had led him to fall into the trap spread for him, he was convinced, by Frank's treacherous cunning, so that Frank might appear before Molly as the prosperous planter, and he, Will Blair, as a mere outsider.

He heard Frank move about, making his preparations. He heard him depart. The procedure was quite simple. Blair knew it well. A goat had been tied up in a likely spot, and Frank, well hidden near at hand, would shoot as soon as the great brute appeared. It was not sport, of course; it was merely the destruction of noxious vermin, to be accomplished with as little trouble as possible.

Once Frank had gone Blair grew restless. He decided to take his rifle and follow. Anything would be better than lying there, and it would be as well to know for certain what had happened. Besides, there was the receipt. It would be best to make sure that that was destroyed.

He picked up his rifle from the rack and charged the magazine. With the weapon under his arm he started off, and even as he stepped down from the verandah the whole night was filled suddenly with the sound of a lion's distant roaring.

Once more the lion "spoke." This time the sound seemed nearer, and Blair felt himself tremble slightly, while sweat started out upon his forehead.

Had it happened, he wondered, and was that the lion's triumphant roar as it launched itself upon the defenceless victim?

All at once Blair found himself running at the top of his speed. An unbearable desire to know the worst drove him on. All was quiet now; no shot had sounded, all nature was still as though in silent homage to that majestic cry. He paused abruptly, afraid of the sound his own feet made. It was late, but the brilliant African moon, to-night at the full, flooded the whole scene with her clear and lambent light. After a little he began to move towards a small clump of thorn trees on the crest of some rising ground. By these trees had been tethered the goat intended to attract the lion, and somewhere near Frank would be—or had been—in hiding.

When he was quite close he paused and listened again. Everything was still strangely silent. An intolerable desire to know what had happened tormented him and drove him on, even while guilty fear held him back. He told himself that if he heard a shot he would run forward to Frank's help before the jammed bolt could do any harm, and he put up a trembling hand to wipe his brow where the perspiration stood in beads. The idea came to him with tremendous relief that perhaps the lion had scented danger, and after roaring defiance from a distance had gone away.

Then, even as this thought crossed his mind, from out of the thorn trees came an enormous lion, clearly visible in the bright moonlight that showed also with equal clearness the figure of a man held by the body between the great beast's jaws, with arms and legs dragging on the grass.

For a moment they were plainly visible, the huge beast and its hapless victim. Quietly the lion moved forward and vanished from sight over the crest of the rising ground on which the thorn trees stood. Blair knew enough of the habits of the lion to realise that the animal was carrying away its victim to some secluded spot to hide the body there for a time, meaning to return later to devour it. Drawn by an awful fascination he hurried on in pursuit, his rifle in his hand.

He wondered confusedly how Frank had felt in that dreadful moment when his rifle refused to work. Had any suspicion crossed his mind? Had there been room in his mind for anything but overwhelming dread? Had he been killed at the first charge or was he perhaps alive even as the lion bore him away?

On the crest of the hill Blair paused abruptly. He had expected to see the lion some distance away, trotting on to its destined hiding-place through the clear moonlight. But instead there was the great beast crouching down in the shadow of some bushes scarcely twenty yards away. Crushed beneath one mighty paw lay its victim, and the only movement the creature made was the switching of its tail against its flanks.

At first Blair could not imagine what had made the brute come to a standstill like this, and then he looked up, and clearly as he saw in the moonlight he none the less believed for the moment that he was mad.

For there, coming quickly towards them up the long slope, was a woman in European dress. He shut his eyes, and opened them and looked again. She was still there, he could see her plainly; he could make out her sun helmet and the swing of her white skirt as she moved forward, and a stifled cry rose to his lips, for he recognised beyond all possibility of doubt that this woman coming

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alone towards them through the heart of the African wild was Molly Winter herself.

In his first moment of panic-stricken bewilderment he almost thought she was there supernaturally to be the witness of his crime, or else, perhaps, to rescue the man he had betrayed. A groan was wrung from him as he saw the great lion, apparently deciding to wait no longer, rise and pick up the body of its victim and move forward.

As yet Molly had not seen the animal. She was coming on with as light a step as though she trod the quiet country lanes near her father's house instead of the fierce wilds of Africa. The lion trotted on to meet her, and again Blair tried to scream and could not, for no sound would issue from his parched and shrunken lips.

It seemed to him that never since the world began could anything more terrible have happened than this drama now being enacted in the clear African moonshine, this drawing together of the unconscious, unsuspecting girl and the great lion that was in such ghastly fashion bringing her her lover.

All at once he began to laugh—a loud, discordant laugh, for indeed at that moment he was not far from madness. Very loud and strange sounded that wild peal of laughter in the silent night, and the lion heard it and stopped, and the girl heard it and paused also, wondering what it was, for never before had she heard a sound like it.

Then she began to walk on again, and at that moment she saw the lion and stopped once more, not clearly understanding what it was, or what ghastly thing it held between its jaws. For an instant girl and beast looked full at each other, and then the lion quietly turned and trotted back the way it had come, towards where Blair stood. The beast still held its victim's body in its jaws, and Blair shouted aloud and waved his arms frantically, as though bidding it keep away, for indeed he could not bear the thought that in such wise should Frank Lindsay be brought back to him.

The lion, seeing him and hearing him shout, again stopped. Apparently, then, there was danger on all sides? The beast wished only to get away quietly to devour its prey, and for that reason had turned back to avoid the approaching Molly. But now retreat was cut off, enemies were before as well as behind, and there was nothing for it but to fight. The animal's mane bristled, it dropped its victim to growl thunderously, and with a sudden crashing roar charged down upon Blair.

Blair saw the yellow death leaping down upon him. His mind was a medley of the strangest, conflicting thoughts. He dropped upon one knee and fired. A roar in answer told his bullet had struck, though apparently in no vital spot, for the huge beast did not pause or falter. Quickly he pulled the bolt back to eject the old cartridge and—it jammed; it would not stir. Frantically he tried again, but the bolt jammed fast, the old cartridge would not budge nor the new one rise from the magazine. The Mannlicher was no more use than a walking-stick or an umbrella.

He screamed like a trapped hare and leapt to his feet, and as he did so the thought flashed into his mind that now he knew well how Frank Lindsay had felt when at just such a moment his weapon also had failed him. He flung the rifle far from him, and turned and ran—uselessly, helplessly, despairingly. He heard the lion coming as he ran on blindly with his arms lifted before his face. As well might he have tried to outrace the wind. An enormous weight seemed to fall upon him and bear him to the ground, he felt a rending pain in his back and the lion's fœtid breath upon his cheek. He felt the beast muzzling him to choose a suitable spot on which to fasten its great jaws, when on his fast dimming consciousness broke a sudden sharp report that even then he knew for the crack of a rifle. Again the weapon rang out. The lion, shot through the heart and brain, reared straight up into the air and fell, crushing him beneath it.

Dimly the dying Blair was aware of someone kneeling beside him.

"That you, Frank?" he muttered. "How's that? I thought the lion had you; I saw him carrying you off."

"No, that was one of the boys, M'Amba, I think," answered Frank quickly. "How do you feel?"

"I'm done," Blair muttered. "Did your rifle jam?"

"No, that was yours; yours jammed," Frank said as he supported the dying man's head.

"That's queer," Blair murmured weakly. "I say, Molly Winter's here. I meant to cut you out—I meant to marry her; that's what I did it for—and to get the plantation back; but I must have confused the rifles somehow."

He died as he spoke, and Frank, who supposed that he was wandering, looked up and saw Molly herself or else—he was not sure—a spirit in Molly's form standing a little distance away.

"What has happened? What has happened?" she called.

"Molly," Frank cried, and ran towards her. "Molly! There's been an accident, but you—you—is it you, or am I mad?"

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"It's me," she answered with a little sob of relief. "Oh, Frank, I'm so glad to see you. I got lost. I left the camp—it was such a lovely night—Mrs. Wells told me not to go far, but I missed my way somehow, and I walked and walked until I got here. I knew your farm was near, and I hoped I should find it. What was that dreadful scream? Why did you fire?"

"It's a lion; it killed one of our boys," Frank answered hastily. "I came up just too late. I had a goat tied up over there, and I expect he knew and came to steal it, poor fellow, but a prowling lion got hold of him and killed him instead."

"Is that all?" Molly asked. "I thought —was that Mr. Blair——?"

"I'm afraid he's been hurt, too," Frank answered gravely. "Come along to the house. I'll rouse my boys and send them off to find Mrs. Wells and bring her along. Poor Blair's rifle jammed—they do sometimes, you know—he said something—I think he must have been wandering. I don't know what he meant."

He hurried Molly back to the house, and there he made her some hot tea, and did what he could to comfort and soothe her till the boys he had suddenly roused and sent off should return with Mrs. Wells.

The shock to Molly had been severe, but she possessed all the natural elasticity of youth, and she soon recovered. But the full meaning of what happened she never knew, and of the strange thoughts her husband found crowding into his mind he has never breathed a word to any living soul. An examination of Blair's rifle showed that it was the presence of a tiny bit of grit that had made the bolt jam. Such an accident had happened before, and probably would again, and no one thought much of it or dreamt that the presence of that bit of grit needed accounting for in any special way.

But sometimes Frank Lindsay—now one of the most prosperous tobacco growers in all Rhodesia—as he sits of an evening on his verandah with his wife by his side and his little son playing at his feet, falls to dreaming of that dreadful night, and of what might so easily have happened if his rifle had been the one to jam.

THE GARDEN GATE.

On summer evenings, scented sweet,
My Gwendolen I used to meet;
And hand in hand beneath the moon
(Who never tells!), we'd gently spoon
Beside the garden gate.

Just now, I burrow in the ground
Out Flanders way, where Huns abound;
But still, in envelopes of green,
I write of things that might have been
Beside the garden gate.

My Gwendolen, who day by day
Sends chatty notes to cheer my way,
Assures me that she'll wait for me,
However long the time may be,
Beside the garden gate.

So one day, when the war is o'er
(Or if I'm lucky, p'r'aps before!),
Again we'll roam beneath the moon,
And once again (d'you blame us?) spoon
Beside the garden gate.

Mabel Dean.

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THE CAR OF MANY REGRETS.

By Edwin Brackett Hunter.

"Can such things be,
And overcome us like a summer cloud,
Without our special wonder?"

Job did not want a car, to begin with; not because of its cost, business was good, and it looked as though the war was not going to affect him after all. But he had always regarded a motor-car from the pedestrian's standpoint as something to be avoided.

But his wife and the girls were so set on owning one that Job Wentworth, with uneasy premonitions of reprisals, consented.

The decision made, the next step was to choose the make. Mrs. Wentworth favoured the boudoir style, but would yield to the majority; the one thing she insisted on was that it must have low steps. Being somewhat heavy, climbing was an effort.

The younger daughter wanted a racing car, where one sits flat on the floor, with lower limbs stretched out straight. The elder daughter was neutral.

Job derived much amusement from their droll conceptions of what was essential, and patiently enlightened them.

What they needed, he explained, was a car that could not exceed a speed of twenty miles an hour; the gasoline tank must be of small capacity, in case of explosion, and solid rubber tyres were preferable, as they eliminated all chance of punctures.

With rather mixed feelings Job heard his family declare that a competent chauffeur would relieve him of worrying about tyre troubles. He had not thought of a chauffeur; it was an easy way out. It was finally decided that Job should consult those of his friends who owned cars, and be guided by their knowledge in the selection of a machine.

He talked to these friends. All told, there were eighteen. Sixteen cast a scattering vote—for sixteen different manufacturers. Two agreed that a certain make was the best; both owned that make. Job felt, after talking with them, that he could not go wrong if he accepted their opinion.

The selection made, and lodging engaged in a good garage, Wentworth called on the motor-car dealer, and was very fortunate; the best car of the season's output was on show. Practically, it was already sold, as a man had looked at it that morning, and had declared that he would return in the afternoon and take it away. As he had not left a deposit, however, Wentworth could have it if he acted at once.

Wentworth acted, and his rare good luck continued, as the salesman assured him. At that very moment a model chauffeur had come in looking for a job.

This man was warranted not to smoke, drink, or use impatient language; it was certain he would never joy-ride—he was married! He could take a car apart, and, more important, put it together again. He knew all the roads by sight, was acquainted with the laws and ordinances, and was intimate with the traffic regulations.

Job looked the fellow over, and asked him why he had left his last position. His explanation more than satisfied, it created for him a wild yearning in Job's bosom. His late master wanted him to violate speed regulations, so, as he did not wish any blots on his immaculate record, he resigned.

Wentworth engaged him, and saw him start for the garage with the car.

There was just one more important detail, the salesman reminded him — insurance. They had a very good agent who would insure him in good companies, and his prices were reasonable.

"Certainly," Wentworth said, feeling well satisfied with his achievements. "Let him insure the car, by all means. I want everything complete. Let your man send the policies and bill to my office."

The car and its driver gave entire satisfaction, and the days passed without the slightest mishap, not even a puncture.

But the laws of compensation are inforced without discrimination. Wentworth's business suddenly took a bad turn. The submarine

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menace made shipments uncertain, he lost several of his largest customers, matters were growing serious, and expenses must be cut ruthlessly.

Rather half-heartedly Job considered selling the car, and then reproached himself for his selfishness. Why should his family be deprived of their chief enjoyment merely to suit his convenience?

He consoled himself with the thought that the car would bring very little money even if he could sell it, and business might pick up in a month or two.

In the morning's post was a bill for thirty pounds' premium for insurance on the car. It was the third one he had received, and the senders reminded him in a little foot-note that the money was more than two months overdue.

This, it seemed to Job, was an unreasonable sum to lay out for precautionary measures.

His chauffeur thought the insurance was unnecessary; he had driven cars for seven years with no accidents happening. The only things to fear were road-hogs and reckless drivers, and he knew how to keep them in their places.

Summoning his typist, Job dictated a polite letter, in which he expressed regret for the trouble he had caused, and said that, after consideration, he felt he did not need the accompanying policies.

He signed the letter, watched the office-boy inclose it, with the policies, in a large envelope, and then sent him out to post it.

This done, he turned to his work with a lighter heart. At last he had discovered something he could dispense with without inconvenience.

But Job was soon interrupted. Mrs. Wentworth was on the 'phone. Her voice choked with wrath and indignation as she announced that their chauffeur had not reported that morning. The garage man said he had taken the car out the previous evening for a road test and had not returned.

Wentworth apologised for the chauffeur's remissness, and promised to look into it at once. He was rather vague in his idea as to how such an internal inspection was to be performed, but another call at the telephone rendered a solution unnecessary.

This second communication was more serious than the first, and after a brief dialogue Wentworth, with a very woebegone look, arose from his desk and prepared to leave the office.

The last communication was from a police-headquarters man. He informed Job that his car was lying, partly smashed, alongside a road in the suburbs. Another car, totally wrecked, stood beside it, indicating that a collision had occurred, probably in the small hours. Both cars were abandoned.

As Job started out to make arrangements to have his machine towed in to some repair shop, a fat, seedy little man collided with him in the doorway.

"Excuse me," he said. "Are you Mr. Job Wentworth?"

Job admitted that he was.

"Then I wish to detain you a few minutes on a matter of the greatest importance. You will be acting in your own interest, sir, to grant me an interview."

Job conducted the anxious little gentleman into his private office, where the visitor sat on the edge of a chair and looked around him uneasily. He closed the door before he began to impart his great secret.

"Mr. Wentworth, I have been retained, sir, retained by several—clients, principals of high standing and integrity. Yes, sir, high integrity."

He paused and wiped his forehead with a day-before-yesterday's handkerchief.

"My principals were motoring last evening, proceeding with all lamps lighted, and at a very moderate speed—very moderate—when your chauffeur bore down on them on the wrong side of the road, sir! Consequently, a collision was inevitable, and, in fact, occurred.

"Considerable damage was sustained by my clients. Damage to their persons and to their property. Also shock. For which, sir, I have the honour to tender you their claims for indemnity."

"How much do they want?"

The lawyer drew a bulky package of documents from an inside pocket, cleaned his glasses, and examined the papers over the top of his lenses.

"These amounts are approximate, but to all intents and purposes they are correct, sir. As one gentleman to another, I take it we are in harmony. A case of justice, sir. Justice and fairness on both sides."

Job nodded.

"The mechanic estimates £160 will satisfy him for repairing the conveyance. Four ladies cut and bruised, damage to apparel, etc., etc. Shall I read you their names and addresses?"

"I don't think that is necessary."

"Just so. Four ladies. I think they will be satisfied with, say, £200——"

"Altogether?"

With this inquiry, uttered aloud, Job resolved that if the answer was "Yes," he would attend church more regularly thereafter and try to live a better life.

Before the reply was given he caught

["THE CAR OF MANY REGRETS" continued overleaf.]

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himself speculating whether it was a child-like innocence or a soulless indifference that possessed the lawyer as he murmured the anticipated answer "Apiece," without even raising his eyes from the paper he was scanning.

"Our chauffeur had eleven stitches taken," he continued. "For him we ask £500. If you will, as a reasonable gentleman, save us the trouble and expense of seeking satisfaction through the courts, I think I am justified in offering a compromise of say, £2,000, for which I will tender you a full release of claims for all parties concerned."

Wentworth, contrite, asked for a day or two to consider the proposition, and the lawyer departed, visibly disappointed.

It was futile to plan a way to evade payment; all effort must be concentrated on a method of raising the money, and at this particular time this unexpected liability meant bankruptcy.

On the morning of the third day after the accident, Job sat at his desk again, opening his letters. He had made no reply to the polite little lawyer, and was inwardly chiding himself for not trying to get the money to pay the claim. Instead, he was gazing dumbly, unthinkingly, at a bulky envelope not yet opened.

This envelope had a strange yet familiar appearance; familiar, certainly, he had seen hundreds like it; strange, because it seemed out of place in the pile of incoming letters.

After staring at it mechanically a minute, he opened the thing, and then he understood the enigma. There were the motor-car insurance policies and the polite letter to the company that he had signed, stating he had decided not to take on the insurance.

His typist had addressed the envelope incorrectly, and the post-office people had returned the letter to the sender as "Not known."

Well, he consoled himself, it did not matter; nothing mattered much. It is pretty hard to lose a business, and he was rather old to hunt for a position. He sighed and leant his head on the desk downheartedly.

He wished he had paid for those policies, but the neglected opportunity, unlike the misdirected letter, never comes back.

The office of the insurance company was but a few streets away, and Job, in no mood for work, determined to surrender the policies in person to avoid further delay.

In the company's office a clerk interrogated him with his eyebrows.

Wentworth stepped forward, policies in his extended hand, and conscious of the disadvantage of making an apology over a very wide counter, said in a faint voice:

"These policies—I intended to return them to you a week ago, but——"

"What's the matter with 'em? Don't you want 'em?"

A sickly laugh from Job.

"I want them, of course—very happy to have them, but, you see, business got bad, and I felt that I could not afford to pay for them, and——"

"You ordered them, didn't you?"

"Yes, certainly. I wanted them——"

"Yes. And you've had 'em two-and-a-half months. And if you'd had a loss you'd have made a claim, wouldn't you? And we'd have had to pay it. I can't take these back. You can cancel them from to-day if you want to, but you'll have to pay an earned premium, right up to date."

"But I had not paid for them, and I thought the insurance was no good unless it was paid," Job replied.

"The insurance is good the minute the policy is signed. If we give you credit for the premium, that's our risk. If you have a loss, we pay; if you don't pay, we sue. Cashier's window on your left."

"Very good," said Wentworth. "If you insist on it, I'll pay gladly."

Fortunately he had a blank cheque with him. He filled it out for the correct amount, handed it to the cashier, and received a receipt. Then he patiently waited until the zealous clerk had time to elevate his eyebrows at him a second time.

"If you will kindly direct me to your loss department I will present a claim," he explained in a honeyed tone. "I tried to tell you the facts, but you would not let me get a word in edgeways, and——"

The clerk was a good loser. The face of the camel, observing the last straw, could not have been more expressive of resignation than his, as he personally escorted Job to the proper department.

And the company settled his losses promptly and quite satisfactorily. But that evening the insurance clerk paused to ask himself if his efforts that day had not been wrongly directed.

At the same minute, Job, sitting down to his dinner, was congratulating himself that while his typist may have made a mistake in addressing the policies, on the whole he could not complain that her energy had been misdirected.

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MR. EDITOR —HIS PAGE.

Just Between Ourselves.

SUMMER FARE FOR AUGUST.

By the time this, the August ROYAL, bursts upon an expectant world, the full heat of summer will be upon us, and heavy reading will be relegated to the days when the crisp touch of autumn restores our brains to their accustomed state of efficiency. Meanwhile you will, I trust, find the Summer Number of the ROYAL a very pleasant companion. We have tried to make it a bright, light-hearted affair, as stimulating and refreshing as a draught of iced—well, in these teetotal days let us call it lemonade, and leave it at that! Anyway, I hope you will find its contents rejoice your hearts, so that our labours in the midst of tropical heat, air-raids, and other disturbing influences may meet with their just reward.

And when you have enjoyed the ROYAL, don't think that its work is done, its appointed destiny fulfilled. Remember our fighting men, and wing it on its way to one of them to liven up the dull moments of him and his comrades, and take their minds off the grim atmosphere of war surrounding them. And if there is no particular claimant to your copy, remember that if you pass it over the counter at the post-office, it will reach some fighting man, and help to make things brighter for him.

DON'T FORGET THE F.A.F.

As most of you know, Miss Gladys Cooper, the beautiful actress, is appealing this year in the ROYAL on behalf of the Fresh Air Fund, which exists for the purpose of sending poor city children into the country in summer-time. Fifteen pence pays for a day's holiday for one child, and fifteen shillings sends a child to the country for a fortnight.

Won't you, as a thank offering for your own holidays, give at least one child the joy of gathering wild flowers and running about on soft grass instead of paving stones? Even a day means such a lot to a kiddie, while if you can spare fifteen shillings there will be a whole fortnight of bliss for some delicate little one. You have always been so generous. I know you won't fail Miss Cooper now, for she is very anxious to have a big harvest this year. So out with your purses, please!

Contributions should be addressed to the Hon. Sec. F.A.F., care of The Editor, THE ROYAL MAGAZINE, 18 Henrietta Street, W.C. 2. I should like to acknowledge with sincere thanks from Miss Cooper and myself the following contributions:

Per Miss Gladys Cooper, £1 15s.; T. Kimmins, £1 10s.; Miss Lamb, 2s. 6d.; W. Norrie, 5s.; S. Conville, 5s.; Anon., 1s. 3d.; R. Thompson, £1 10s.; A. Godding, £3; Master Gunner, £1; Anon., 15s.; Capt. W. Jenkins, £1 10s.; Anon., 1s. 3d.; D. H. Wood, £3; Miss Harris, 2s. 6d.; Miss M. Kennedy, 2s. 6d.; Miss K. Kennedy, 2s. 6d.; S. Hindley, £1 10s.; Nurse Hunt, 1s. 3d.; E. Sparshott, 2s. 6d.; Anon., 2s. 6d.; Miss Spier, £1 10s.; Dora, 15s.; Neville Caley, 10s.; Miss Kaye, 10s.; Miss Ellis, 1s. 3d.; R. C. and P. Wilson, 2s. 6d.; P. Gregson, 1s. 3d.; R. and M. Cary, £1; S. J. B., 1s. 3d.; Mrs. Nixon, 2s. 6d.; P. L. Sandbach, 10s.; A Friend, 2s.; Well Wisher (Glasgow), 10s.; Football Match at Hipswell Camp, £5; A Grumbler, 1s.; Miss A. White, £5; J. Wilbraham, 3s. 7d.; Capt. F. Rodda, £1 16s.; Miss S. Jackson, 5s.; R. Hayler, 5s.; D. Gedes, 2s. 6d.; F. Stokes, 2s. 6d.; J. White, 1s. 3d.; A. S. Boston, £5 5s.; Mrs. Parker, £1 10s.; Sister Dalrymple, £1; In Memory of a Brave Soldier, 4s.; M. O. Hall, 6s. 6d.; Mrs. Neligan, 10s.; B. R. Newberry, £1; J. Gray, £1; B. Brown, 15s.; S. Russell, 2s. 6d.; R. L. H., £1; A. L. H., 1s.

Grand (*R.M.*) total .. £88 8s. 7d.

RESULT OF "FOOTLIGHTS" COMPETITION.

In the May number of THE ROYAL I invited all fighting men to send in the name of any actress they would particularly like to see featured in THE ROYAL, and offered prizes to the twelve who, in addition to voting for the winning lady, gave the best reasons for their choice.

According to the votes recorded, Miss Gladys Cooper holds first place in the hearts of the Army and Navy, and the men who acclaimed her as their favourite actress—supporting their contention with really sound arguments—have received either a pack of playing cards or a silver pencil-case. And if we can succeed in wooing Miss Cooper to pose for some photographs the prize-winners will also receive copies of THE ROYAL in which they appear.

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